

the domestic masses is what compelled the U.S. power structure to abandon the Vietnam War adventure. The broader sectors of U.S. society were feeling directly the despair and insecurity resulting from their forced involvement in that protracted war as cannon fodder, against a people a half a world away, who had done nothing to them. With the contraction of the U.S. economy caused by the costs of that war, Americans were also feeling the pinch in their pocketbooks. Consequently, the American public was becoming more and more radicalized in their displeasure with and challenges to the owners of U.S. power.

With heavy defeats being whipped on U.S. military forces by the poor, unsophisticated and relatively tiny Vietnamese people, U.S. prestige was quickly waning at home and abroad. The U.S. elite began to fear – with good reason – the onset of a social revolution similar to what occurred in 1917 in Tsarist Russia. The Russian Revolution was similarly sparked by growing social disaffection with Russian rulers and mass demonstrations (which were put down brutally) prompted by economic turmoil and insecurity suffered on account of catastrophic Russian losses in WWI, which came only a decade after a humiliating military defeat at the hands of Japan.

In the wake of the fiasco in Vietnam, the U.S. refrained from direct protracted military interventions and occupations for over two decades, electing to engage instead in secret proxy wars and indirect disruptions of unwanted foreign governments through arming and mobilizing those countries' militaries to overthrow such governments and covert activities. This was to avoid again creating large national debts and body counts. So, clearly the U.S. elite fears its population's revolutionary potential and has tiptoed around sparking that potential to life. Indeed, the bombing of marine barracks in Lebanon led U.S. forces to promptly abandon its brief role in the U.S. / Israel occupation of Beirut in 1983. Similarly, when the U.S. occupied Somalia in 1995, under the pretense of "peacekeeping," and soldiers began killing civilians, which prompted an angry mob to kill several U.S. soldiers, the U.S. promptly disengaged in 1995.

– End of Part One –

Kevin (Rashid) Johnson no. 185492
Red Onion State Prison
P.O. Box 1900
Pound, VA 24279

SOUTH CHICAGO ABC
ZINE DISTRO
POB 721 HOMewood IL 60430

Two Essays by Kevin (Rashid) Johnson



A Biography of Revolutionary Development
A Theory Towards Combating American Imperialism
(Part One)

Rashid: A Biography of Revolutionary Development

I've been asked often by activists of various stripes to give something of a background on myself (some insight into myself and my struggles), which can be shared within movement and broaden circles. Two factors--both of them subjective--have left me hesitant to do so. The first factor being that I am emphatically opposed to personality cults, and because of this have often shunned drawing attention to myself. The second factor is that I do not desire to sound as a self-assumed "authority" on matters affecting the lives and futures of masses of people. However, it seems that by my silence, some folks have gained just these impressions about me, viz, that I have some interest to gain a celebrity status within movement circles (or in essence that I'm an opportunist or worse), or that I perceive my views as correct and unchallengeable.

While I *do* tend to present critiques (especially of activities on the Left) in often challenging language, this is done primarily to stimulate dialogue on the points addressed. Theories are developed and clarified through dialectics, and proven and refined through practice. In any regard this limited biography will shed some light on me as I have developed, on my ideas as they have developed, and on some of my experiences which have affected my development and which I believe have given me invaluable insight into matters of contending with oppressive institutions. In some regards it may seem that I was the aggressor and the pigs the victims, and in many situations I was, but again, this is an account of my growth and experiences. Furthermore, in any situation where there is a contest of violent forces, an offensive is necessary if one expects to prevail--even temporarily.

I should begin by emphasizing that four traits are predominant in my character, traits which I believe are largely lacking within the American Left milieu, and are largely the cause of strategic failures of the Left. These four traits are that I am an extremist, a tactical thinker, I have an uncompromising will, and I am willing to suffer and give my life for the people. And it is on account of these tendencies (and the results--although limited by my conditions--that I've been able to produce in my isolated struggles against oppressive institutions), that I believe I'm able to offer some valid insight into effective methods of resisting and ultimately defeating systems of oppression. Talking about abuse, merely telling people that they're being abused, won't check or stop the problem.

I've been imprisoned for fourteen years (since I was eighteen), the last ten of which I've spent in solitary, confined almost always within specially constructed and modified cells, and often totally isolated from other prisoners. Although I was not exposed to his writings until just some three years ago, my actions against the pigs and their proxies have been motivated by the same drive that motivated George Jackson, viz, "I have always been inclined to get disturbed over organized injustice or terrorist practice against the innocents--wherever...." And even though I was under illegitimate

"scorched earth" tactics of destroying economic resources and thus starving a society &/or its military into submission.) This is why nukes are termed "strategic" and "first strike weapons/" and are perceived as the most powerful weapons in the arsenals of modern nations. Why again, because they can cripple an industrial country's economy (and power base) almost instantly.

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. devised to defeat the Vietnamese anti-colonial struggle in both North and South Vietnam by destroying the bases of their economies. In industrialized North Vietnam, the U.S. precisely targeted transportation and industrial sites, dams, cities and other economic infrastructure, in the agrarian-based South, they indiscriminately bombs the widely dispersed villages and crops. The U.S. however, was still unable to defeat the Vietnamese. The U.S.'s brutal oppression only reinforced their will to resist and in the face of their ingenious and fierce struggle, the U.S. was unable to assert its prestige over the natives - what the U.S. calls "winning the hearts and minds of the people."

Likewise, when all else failed to defeat the successful 1978 popular revolution in Nicaragua (a direct challenge to U.S. prestige because occurring within its claimed region of control,) the U.S. contra war and invasion targeted Nicaragua's economic infrastructure. As Time magazine admitted (in an article frequently quoted by Chomsky,) the U.S. military objective was to "wreck the economy and prosecute a long and deadly proxy war until the exhausted natives overthrow the unwanted government themselves" leaving them "with wrecked bridges, sabotaged power stations and ruined farms." U.S. official military policy had the contra forces and air strikes specifically targeting farms, oil depots, health clinics, and other (soft) economic targets, while the Reagan administration blocked loans to Nicaragua from the Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank and then imposed a full embargo in 1985, and then blamed Sandinista government policies for the ensuing economic turmoil.

It occurs so common as to need no elaboration that western powers' main method of undermining power in those societies whose rulers offend them, is by imposing blockades, sanctions, embargoes and high tariffs on trade calculated to cripple their economies and force them to submit to Western control - the U.S. policy on Cuba being a primary example. Furthermore, in addition to barring all international trade with Cuba, the U.S. went further to cripple its tourist industry by carrying out bombings of Cuban tourist sites and hotels.

Those various examples of the targeting of the economies of societies as the primary source of neutralizing or destroying their holds on power, makes quite clear that a society's economy is the base of power of those who rule or aspire to rule them.

Obviously, if the vulnerability of a ruling class lies in its holds over economic power, then we have an explanation as to why modern industrial powers do not treat the broad masses of their own populations as brutally as they do foreign populations. The domestic population has direct access to the imperial country's economic infrastructure and can therefore disrupt and destroy the power base, themselves. This power of

and turn that control over to the working masses themselves. And herein lies the solution to another problem, viz, the possible recurrence of elite prestige. When the common people come to control their own survival resources and trash the old economic arrangement, they will thereby gain confidence in their own collective power of self rule, without need of edicts from above. They will vest prestige in themselves, and, as with the societies of headmen, no individuals will be able to exert monopoly power over the society, because everyone will have a shared confidence and sense of responsibility in the society as a whole. The natural order will be "from each according to his ability, to each according to need." Mutual aid and generosity will then be the basis for admiration and respect, and there will be no more need of a military-police apparatus to secure law and order to protect the holdings of one group from being equally shared within the society. This will be that process of the "withering away of the state." That Marx envisioned.

To illustrate the centrality of economic arrangements in the survival of societies and in maintaining the holds on power for those who rule them, we can look to history. In order to enforce relocations and genocide against the Native Americans (essentially to destroy their societies) in pursuit of driving them from the territory that the U.S. aspired to acquire, the U.S. army and its hirelings targeted and decimated the staple of these nomadic peoples' economic systems, viz, their crops and the buffalo. In order to effect the spread of capitalism and European colonial domination in Asia, Africa and Latin America from the 1500's to present, the Europeans had to destroy the native feudal handicraft and tribal economies and replace them with capitalist modes of production, also using prestige (mind control) as a principal weapon of conditioning the natives to consent to European control and domination. This prestige took the form of the constructs of white racism and redemption that survives and is still used to this very day.

The natives were taught the notion of superiority of European culture, identity and religion; that in order to be rescued from their own backwardness, heathenism, ignorance and savagery, they needed to be tutored in the methods of white civilization. Never minding that before the 17th century (that point when capitalism began effectively destroying and replacing the native economies,) the living standards in Africa, Asia and Latin America were at least as high and higher than that in Europe. Today's terminology used by the west to reassert its prestige and economic domination over the old 3rd world colonial territories is "spreading democracy," the same old concept of tutoring natives into the values of western civilization.

The defeat of Germany and Japan during WWII was accomplished by crippling the industrial centers of their economies. This was done through naval blockades and aerial bombardments of their cities, and ultimately dropping nuclear bombs on two of Japan's major industrial production and distribution centers - the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nuclear warheads are weapons the very functions of which are to attack and instantly cripple cities (the economic nerve centers of industrial societies,) and thus destroying an industrial society's will and ability to fight. (The old

capitalist influences before and during much of my imprisonment, I've always been engaged in something of a running battle with the establishment.

The forces that combined to ensure this last lengthy incarceration were driven by my having earned the label while in society as a "cop killer", and personal revenge against me by some pig "victims" of my actions.

I was jailed twice in 1990, the first confinement being a brief one (I was acquitted), the second being upon the arrest from which I remain imprisoned. In order to give some insight into my present incarceration, the first 1990 arrest must be detailed and other background facts given. While I do not wish to glamorize my past anti-social activities, I must give some account of my past to allow an understanding of who I am today.

Like so many young blacks, I was involved in the street level drug trade, only I took a different tact than most in my approach to "the game". I perceived myself as being a one-man army. Under various pretexts I would position myself on others' turfs, first in a neutral role to study and take in all that was going on, e.g., who the suppliers were, how much money came through the area in sales, pig activities, who amongst the sellers were about getting money and who were about gaining reputations as "gunslingers", the various weights and sizes of products being sold, etc. Upon gaining a good feel of the area, I'd move in and, using bribes and violence selectively, would basically take over. Those who sided with me had my complete loyalty. My methods led to many "wars" against rival groups, which I most often came out on top of. The opposition was all too visible, their hangouts, homes, and flashy cars being known, and their patterns predictable. I, on the other hand, came and went unpredictably. I did no hanging out in clubs or otherwise, and had no known resistance or method of travel. Observation, hit and evasion, was my mode of combat. When, because of these exchanges, an area became too "hot" for business, I'd move on to another area.

The last area that I frequented I organized upon a more developed program. I didn't need to establish myself there, because my reputation was already known in the area. I suspect that my name was also known to the city pigs. So I focused on driving the pigs and any competition out. Ironically, I was never really concerned with profits; I was more concerned with unity within the clique and community affinity.

Each weekend, Saturdays and Sundays, we'd organize community galas. Each weekend a different member of our clique would pay all expenses. We'd buy bushels of crabs, cases of beer, and pay the local "shot house" people to prepare all sorts of foods and beverages. Large, amplified speakers were set out on the curb, and everyone in the neighborhood ate and danced at no cost. This won us a lot of local affection within the complex and even with the complex manager. Violence within our group was strictly forbidden, as was flashing and randomly shooting off guns in the area. "Customers" were to be respected and no "sales" were to be made around children. Pig patrols were driven out, under gunfire. They only openly ventured into

totally and relentlessly. The victims are free to criticize their oppressor so long as they fear and respect him. The wiser oppressor will devise to control his victims by turning segments of his victim class against other segments by showing one segment a degree of favored treatment or delegated power (giving them a lesser degree of prestige) an artificial privileged status which is totally dependent upon their keeping the bully in power and keeping their 'inferiors' in line. Therefore, in order to forge a united resistance within such a stratified victim class, the privileged status of the favored sectors must be undermined by actions which will bring down the bully's raw violence on the heads of the entire victim class. As Sun Tzu observed, even avowed enemies tossed about in a boat on a stormy sea, will cooperate "just as the right hand does with the left."

In having addressed the function that prestige plays in power, we can then examine to what extent today's leftist activities either serve or undermine the prestige of elite power. Actually those limited efforts of those leftist groups which I mentioned at the beginning, serve to reinforce the prestige of capitalist power. The educators' failure and fear to organize the masses toward genuine resistance leaves the right to wield power by default, free of all challenge, while the repeated decisive losses which the disorganized youth (and often enraged urban Blacks) suffer in their positional clashes with the establishments' goons only reinforces the perception of empire's invulnerability. Prestige thus remains free of any real challenge, and the struggle for popular rule remains in a state of paralysis. That is, until we begin to undermine the prestige of power.

Once decisive attacks are made upon the prestige of power where then do we find the actual "bases of power." Against which our forces of resistance must be concentrated? The answer can be found in the remaining two elements, which Confucius recognized as necessary for a ruler to secure holds on power. Confucius observed that military power was not decisive, but next to prestige (i.e. preserving the confidence of the people in their rulers,) was the rulers' control over the food, i.e., the society's economic resources. Thus in order to undermine power at its seat, resistance must be directed at the base of social power, which it supplies and provides for the very survival of the society at large and its political and military forces. Hence, whoever controls the economy controls the society; as all societies are organized around their economic systems, just as the common wage-worker's life is organized around her job and the acquisition of her wages. Her free time, family time, ability to travel, and entire standard of living and quality of life is determined and controlled by, and organized around, her job. With her entire life regulated by her access to the wage, the capitalist boss becomes her master.

Consistent with Confucius's observation and as demonstrated in the earlier analysis of stratified societies, the power of ruling classes comes from their ability to control the common people's access to survival resources. So long as the people are helpless to feed themselves, they are dependent on those who regulate and control their access to basic necessities. Therefore, in order to defeat their power, elite control over the economy must be broken, and the economic arrangement itself revolutionized to take control out of the hands of the privileged minority

people are just not inclined to attack that power. So, consequently, our first attack is on the prestige of power. That was Jonathan's job, to destroy the prestige of power, the iconoclastic act of crushing symbols.* Once these symbols are crushed, and people see that they are vulnerable, then we can move on to the actual destruction of these bases of power. Because power, after the destruction of its prestige, will be forced to revert back to its original force, raw brute force - violence." It will be this onset of raw violence, when stripped of its prestige, which breeds in its victims the will to resist out of anger, despair, frustration, and the will to survive. And it is this resistance which, as George observed, must be channeled toward the "destruction of the bases of power."

24

- On August 7, 1970 Jonathan, George's younger brother, led an armed raid on the courthouse in Marin County, California, where he armed and attempted to liberate several Black prisoners. This action was calculated to undermine the symbolic cloak of prestige and invulnerability that surrounds the political and military institutions and thus renders the oppressed classes passive in the face of their oppression.

As another example (If over-generalized) illustration oh how prestige works, let's take the example of the ubiquitous schoolyard bully. By instilling fear in his victims through selective acts of intimidating violence, the bully inculcates in his victim class the idea of his invulnerability. Prestige. So long as his victims look at him in awe they will not resist him, even though they may greatly outnumber him. However, let even one of his victims grow tired of his terror and successfully attack and defeat him. His prestige, his image of invulnerability to attack from his victims, is instantly shaken to the core. He immediately loses face, a loss which inspires in his other victims a glimmer of hope in resistance. The brute must then either resort to raw terror to regain his credibility and reclaim the fear and submission of victims (an act which, carried out indiscriminately, will likely provoke hatred and contempt in his victims and thus spur their drive for further resistance,) or he must relent his holds on power over them.

In order to avoid enraging his entire victim class, the bully's terror must be concentrated against the one who first cost him his prestige. He must make a public example to all who would dare resist him. But if their resistance becomes broad enough before he can check it, the bully will be unable to use violence judiciously, but must attack large sectors of his victim class in support of his own survival, driving more and more of his victims to anger and desperation. This raw terror will provoke an increasing cycle of resistance which, if properly guided, will spiral out of the bully's ability to contain and ultimately lead to his defeat.

This in the real world of oppressor and oppressed is how prestige works and is the key to its destruction and the defeat of the oppressor. But until prestige is destroyed, no matter how conscious the victims are made of their conditions of oppression (however much they may be 'educated' about the corrupt nature of their ruler,) the victims as a whole will not resist their oppressor. While those disillusioned few who defy the odds and dare to resist must be isolated from the overall victim class and suppressed

5
beating each other more than me. Experience has taught me something which may be of use to those resisting organized oppression: pigs don't tend to beat a person who fights back as brutally as they do one who shows fear or passively accepts being attacked. Anyway, I was arrested by Witt on charges of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. They forgot all about the brother, who walked a short distance away and watched the spectacle.

At court I declined an attorney and recited to the judge what had happened. He took it all in with barely concealed humor. He was especially humored about my making faces and my described reaction to Witt's pushing me. Witt was furious. When he turned to Witt asking if what I'd described were true, Witt replied, "Yeah, basically." The judge admonished Witt and told me that I was free to go. On the way out of the courthouse, Witt assured me that if he saw me in the complex again it would be him and me. My young pride never allowed me to refuse a challenge. I replied that I'd be there.

On June 4, 1990 I stood deliberately in front of the forbidden complex, in broad daylight and armed, talking to a sister who lived in the area. Suddenly, Witt pulled up at high speed, brakes screeching, and ran up onto the curb. He jumped out of his unmarked car with sidearm drawn (a .38) yelling, "Rashid, I've got your ass now!" I darted around a building to get the sister out of the line of fire and pulled out my own weapon (a .44 with a very long barrel). When Witt bent the corner, gunfire erupted. He dove headfirst behind a concrete porch. While I stood prone facing him, he remained crouched behind the porch, shooting wildly in my direction. My gun empty, I ran through a nearby creek (ditching the gun in the process), sprinted through the complex, only to be tackled from behind (dizzy from blood loss) by about ten backup pigs. In the exchange with Witt a bullet had passed through my right deltoid muscle.

While I was lying handcuffed on the ground, with pigs holding me in place, Witt caught up, .38 in one hand, my .44 in the other. He was hysterical, and obviously shaken but uninjured. He went into a frenzy, threatening to kill me, calling me every variety of "nigger" in the book, and pressing the barrel of the gun against my teeth. When he removed the gun, I told him that he should either do what he threatened or "shut the fuck up!" His response was to crack me across the head with the barrel of my .44, lacerating my scalp. What followed probably saved me from a vicious ass-kicking or worse. A brother came running out of a nearby apartment cursing the pigs for running around (chasing me) with guns drawn, while his children played nearby. The pigs promptly swarmed and beat him bloody as his kids looked on.

While going through my pockets, the pigs observed blood running from my jacket sleeve. Upon a rough inspection, my shoulder injury was discovered. Regardless, the battered brother and I were dumped in a pig wagon and taken to headquarters. I was held in the parking lot with Witt and others running a stream of threats by me. Witt was obviously in a quandary to justify confronting me to begin with. He wasn't even on duty. He proposed that if I said nothing about his having shot me, he wouldn't charge me with any felonies--

particularly for attempted capital murder of a pig. I gave no response. When finally taken to the hospital (Medical College of Virginia) some hours later, my shoulder and scalp were sutured and my arm placed in a sling. The cause of my laceration and puncture wounds being "unknown." I was charged with trespassing and merely pointing a firearm at Witt. 6

Upon entering the Richmond city jail this time I was compelled to take up an unfinished rival "war" where it had left off on the street. The opposition occupied an entire tier--some 120 cats--adjacent to my own. They were only prepared to jump me. I was, however, prepared to do a little more. I ditched the shoulder sling, procured some weapons, and next day a standoff occurred. Me and five others against almost the entire rival tier. The pigs were apparently tipped off and swarmed the jail hallway before we'd revealed our weapons or the first blow was struck. I was packed off to another tier, only to sneak onto the rival tier (a dormitory) during the confusion of movement at mealtime several weeks later. A battle erupted as soon as the tier gate slammed shut. I ended up with a head laceration and about four of them suffered stab wounds before the pigs invaded the tier to break the fight up. Upon my release from solitary a few weeks later, a similar situation occurred. By then I was looked at as a 175 lb., 5'9" maniac, by both pigs and prisoners. The opposition offered a truce with amenities on the side. Upon agreement of some of my cohorts, the truce was accepted, but other conflicts persisted. Fights were frequent. I was stabbed in a couple incidents; in both of them my opponents were disarmed and were butchered in return. It was finally accepted by all potential rivals that I was best left alone.

While jailed, an acquaintance of mine from the streets, John Albert Chambliss, Jr. (John Jr.), was arrested. He'd been a fugitive for some time, as foremost of Richman's most wanted. Upon his capture he agreed to work with the pigs to get out of his own charges. Initially, he was placed on the tier with me, obviously to draw out information; however, I never discussed anything of substance with him, or anyone, especially since I'd observed that under conditions of confinement, he'd become a kitten. This was in total contrast to the vicious image he'd portrayed on the streets.

It was around the time of John Jr.'s capture that I began to receive a flurry of indictments: murder, attempted murder, malicious wounding, etc. I didn't want to believe that he might have been responsible. The incidents for which I was charged were of particular interest to the city pigs. One involved a person's having been shot by an alleged sniper, shooting from inside a project building. The pigs had responded by surrounding the entire block and calling in their own snipers, helicopters, and SWAT team. The pigs acknowledged seeing the shooter moving around in the apartment while it was under siege, yet when their SWAT teams raided it some ten hours later, they embarrassingly could find no one. Another incident involved the shooting of several people who were allegedly attached because the shooter thought they were undercover pigs. I was further accused of shooting up several patrol cars with pigs inside them, shooting at pigs, etc.; however, no formal charges followed.

thereby able to preserve law and order through controlling the minds of the masses without the need to resort to raw, brutal force. 23

In recognizing the role of prestige in society we've identified that totally subjective phenomenon which allows people to submit to oppression and exploitation. In his political writings, Niccolo Machiavelli examines overall whether a ruler should base his command on the basis of love or fear. He too recognized the centrality of prestige in controlling masses of people. He concluded that if there must be a choice between love and fear, fear is preferable so long as it is that quality of fear which prompts respect and not contempt or hatred. To avoid provoking hatred, the ruler must avoid violating the person, possessions and honor of his subjects unreasonably. He must always maintain an appearance of good and he must aspire towards achieving great accomplishments in matters of state and industry. It is through these methods that the ruler acquires prestige and fame and the submissions of his subjects.

In fact, I can give a succinct example of prestige at work taken from right here in these prisons. In here the pigs are vastly outnumbered by the prisoners - yet our resistance to their power is relatively non-existent. The pigs' ability to rule and keep order is based solely upon fear, upon the majority of cons to accept the uniforms' power as legitimate, unquestionable, unchallengeable and therefore invulnerable. They actually hold the pig and the social order that empowers him, in awe. But by my own actions, it's been proven to my satisfaction that pig power is not so formidable, which is why I've spent the last ten years of my confinement in solitary, housed away in specially modified cells, often kept totally isolated from all other prisoners. I've taught them that violence, brutal oppression, and terror tactics is a two-way street with me. In responses to their abuses of me and my peers, I've frequently holed their bodies, torched and scorched their flesh, broken their bones, single-handedly repelled their K-9's and done battle with their goon squads more times than I can recount. Of course I've endured every brutality which their tiny minds could devise. Yet their efforts have never deterred me. Consequently, they've offered or made every concession short of allowing me to walk free out of the prison gates. But my abilities are limited by my conditions which make it impossible for me to reach the principle enemies at their seats of power. Irregardless, I'm convinced that the prestige of power is nothing but so much hype.

Indeed, George Jackson recognized that prestige in and of itself exists nowhere except in peoples' minds. "Prestige is an abstract, an intangible. It has no material basis, no substantial objective reality. One can't taste it, see it or smell it, it can't be heard. So how does it exist? Subjectively, in the mind's eye, after the fact of some connected circumstances that may also have been subjective." In a taped speech given by him shortly before his death in 1971, he further elaborated on prestige as follows: "The prestige of power at its maturity is a thing that will prevent people from acting against that power. This pig is a psychological thing, a state of being wherein the bourgeoisie reign of terror need not rely on violence to sustain itself. It's relying on something that happened in the past... where it secured itself. And it's drifting at this point, the prestige of power means that it is drifting at this point and resting on its laurels. At this stage

enforced taxation and totally isolating the masses from economic control are the roots of ruling class power, from monarchs to wealthy elites; with the military and political institutions operating to enforce the social order and mold public opinion in support of the system.

22 In the state-level society, power and prestige are determined by who can most securely hoard the largest portion of social wealth (wealth produced by the labor of the common people) as opposed to the respect to which the headman acquired based upon his generosity and fairness in distributing the social wealth. All state-level societies are based upon distinct inequalities between ruler and ruled, and rich and poor, thus the necessity of sophisticated military-police systems to maintain law and order. Through threat of physical coercion, the police and military are the ultimate force that keeps the exploited and poor in line. But because raw force prompts rebellion (oppression breeds resistance) states have found it more expedient and efficient to control the masses by controlling their thoughts and diverting their attention away from the reality of their oppression, which is done in a variety of ways, including generating perpetual fear of internal and outside enemies (real and created) supporting entertainment and information media which glamorizes the wealthy and ruling class prestige and military might, promoting values of conformity and loyalty to rulers (patriotism) political rallies, universal education, all manner of diversionary entertainment and hedonistic outlets, and keeping the common people forever busy with work in a perpetual struggle to survive: as Aristotle observed "It is in the interests of a tyrant to make his subjects poor, so that... the people are so occupied with their daily tasks that they have no time for plotting."

So it can be said in general that societies, whether egalitarian or stratified, are organized or ruled by those who acquire respect or prestige in the eyes of the masses, who control the access of the people to basic needs, and who have control over the military power. This political, economic and military power can either be vested in the masses themselves, a small group of individuals or one individual.

Confucius keenly recognized the role of these three principles in organizing societies. When asked what conditions are necessary for one to rule securely over masses of people, he replied: 1) a sufficiency of military power, 2) a sufficiency of food, and 3) the faith of the people in the ruler. Asked further what should be omitted if only two of these were possible, he replied, "omit the military power." He then answered that if it were possible to keep only one "let them lose their food and keep their faith in you." Confucius understood that without some level of willing submission to power, no people could be ruled or enslaved, but with faith in their rulers' power, their commitment is unshakable. Whether based on admiration or fear this "faith" (prestige) is indispensable to power.

As George Jackson observed, "Prestige bars any serious attack on power. Do people attack a thing they consider with awe, with a sense of its own legitimacy?" The answer of course, is "no" which is a primary reason why the controllers of modern empire incessantly glamorize their opulence and the sophistication and prowess of their military-police bodyguard through their mass-oriented information and entertainment media, teaching the people to hold elites in awe and fear. They are

7 I pled guilty to the sniping charges to clear a cohort of involvement—he had a long suspended prison term over his head. Upon the testimony of John Jr., his girlfriend, Paula Ellis, and others (including Witt, who was instrumental in having the charges placed against me), I was convicted of the other shootings. I was sentenced to life plus. Chambliss was returned to society, where he was allowed to carry out any acts he pleased, under complete pig immunity, as long as he aided them in entrapping, capturing, and convicting others. According to reliable sources, he'd become so bold that when the pigs converged on an area where he was present, he'd identify himself by name, state that he was armed, and then proceeded to finger everyone nearby him who possessed guns or narcotics and where the contraband was located. He was also involved in planting drugs in peoples' homes and then having the pigs raid them.

However, John Jr. eventually destroyed his usefulness to the pigs by perjuring himself in a later trial. In that case (Commonwealth of Virginia v. Shawn Marshall), he testified to being present and witnessing three black males shoot a pizza deliveryman. When all other evidence at the trial completely contradicted his account, he admitted on the stand to lying for his own benefit. It was only then that John Jr. was rejailed on further charged and seriously prosecuted and convicted. I had the brief pleasure of getting a few passing licks off Chambliss on the day that I was transferred to the prison system from jail. He'd been brought to the jail's transport area from his protective custody tier for court. I was in the area waiting for the DOC transport to pick me up. I saw him pass by the en route to the area and hid behind a shower stall. When they brought him out, I managed to raise a few knots on his head—for lack of being able to locate any hard or sharp objects in the area—before the pigs swarmed in to pull me off him. I was locked in another holding area. As a juvenile, I'd avoided many upstate commitments by feigning the "nut role". I was very good at duping the "experts". Upon being faced with convictions on the crimes I faced, I resorted to the same chicanery as an adult, to no ultimate avail. For a time I persisted in this role while in prison, which only prompted abuses from the pigs. The pigs have this instinctive tendency to openly abuse prisoners whom they believe are unsound of mind or of limited intelligence, since they believe that unintelligent prisoners are incapable of challenging their abuses, whether by direct action or by articulating complaints.

Because I accepted my lifestyle and all of its consequences, I was always reluctant to involve my family or others on the outside of prison in my conflicts with the pigs. I dealt with my own problems--directly. For a while I accepted some of the milder pig abuses with only minor responses. They'd tamper with my meals or refuse them altogether or become unnecessarily physical with me. My responses were to become counter physical. The situation intensified and ultimately led to my encounters with their goon squads on something like a thrice-weekly basis for months on end. Injuries occurred on both sides; in comparison mine were relatively minor. They were suffering broken bones, dislocated joints, and lacerations. Most of the goon squad encounters resulted in pigs taking injury leaves. The

administrative costs of their mounting casualties (pigs taking sick leave with pay--feigned injuries were routine) outweighed the subjective benefits of seeking revenge. It became quite clear that terrorism did not work on me, except to provoke the very responses the pigs wanted to suppress. They had no military option with me. So they pacified me in every way conceivable short of allowing me to walk free out of prison.

The pigs walked wide circles around me and instead targeted my less committed peers, which I found equally intolerable. My reactions quickly led them to also walk wide circles around my peers when I was around. When I left, it was a different matter altogether. As an indirect method of trying to neutralize me, the pigs routinely tried to proposition or instigate other prisoners into violent conflicts with me. These efforts usually failed, either because I'd target the instigating pig, mutual respect which existed between me and the other prisoners prevented it (sometimes the prisoner would himself check the pig for attempting to provoke disunity), or I'd face the opponent down.

By 1993 I was on a cycle of being transferred on a weekly to monthly basis between different prisons. The pigs being under the impression that I wouldn't be long enough in their presences to retaliate became determined to break me through increasingly severe methods. I in turn stepped up my own level of violence. I was being attacked with rottweilers and being bodily restrained to bare steel and concrete in the dead of winter with cell windows wide open for weeks at a time. I would break out of the restraints and destroy them on a daily basis. They'd fight me and strap me back down, often experimenting, trying to devise cramped and painful ways of putting the restraints on so that I couldn't get out again. I'd break out again. This went on until I had literally destroyed every set of restraining devices they had (which occurred in 1992 at the Buckingham prison, leading to my transfer), or until they'd give up. I was starved, dehydrated, and left naked in freezing cells for weeks to months in winter with windows open and the A.C. blowing cold air, etc. During latter 1992 to early 1993, I began fighting them so intensely (twice running the K-9's back out of the cell) that they simply would not fight me anymore no matter what the provocation.

During the middle of 1993, an attempt was made to intimidate me into submission by the pigs at the Powhatan prisons by bringing two K-9's in front of my cell and, with the dogs standing by, beating another prisoner in my plain view while he was handcuffed. My first response was to throw every item I could lay hands on at the pigs (the cells had bars instead of solid doors). This prompted them to move the dogs away and stop their attack. I then wrenched the metal sink/commode unit from the wall and flooded the tier. The pigs decided to leave as I was working on the sink/commode. Next, I fashioned a ten-inch rod from the commode into an ice pick. I sat the commode atop the bare bunk, sat on the commode, and awaited their return. For three days they tried to dehydrate me and negotiate me out of the cell; for three days I refused to be handcuffed. They still would not fight me.

For several months I'd been seeking a transfer to the newly

concerned with creating a sense of group cohesion and support for preserving the social order. Economics are concerned with supplying the members of society with the means of survival (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, medical care, sources of drinkable water, etc.) and organizing society so that these needs are met. Furthermore, no society can preserve itself without military capability. In hierarchical societies, the military apparatus (which includes police forces and prisons) are needed, not only to protect the society from external aggressors, but to protect the hierarchy from challenge by members within the society itself, also to maintain their control over the society's economy, their holds on amassed social wealth, and to serve them in expanding their power and domination over other societies. All three of these phenomenon -- politics, economics and military -- work together to form and maintain a society, whether primitive or modern, whether socialist or capitalist, whether a colony or an empire.

Before beginning my analyses of struggle against oppression, it seems appropriate here to briefly trace the evolution of societies from the pre-state egalitarian band societies (or what some social analysts call "primitive communism") up to modern stratified state-level societies, and how political, economic and military activities operated in each. Three forms of political organization are prominent in the transformation of societies from egalitarian to stratified state societies; these being of big men, chiefs and ruling classes. These different developments were characterized by who controlled, and the manner of control of, the society's economy (or the distribution of basic survival necessities amongs the members of the society.)

In the primitive society the position of big man (head man) was granted based on one's generosity and equity, which in fact left the headman poor in possessions but rich in respect. His was a position given by popular consent. The headman was responsible for fair distribution of resources within the society to ensure that the needs of all members were met. Because of the respect his role created, he was the popular organizer of trade with other societies, war parties, etc. It would have been impossible for a headman to dominate his society because all members were equally armed and equally able to survive off of the land through foraging and hunting. He therefore could not militarily dominate them nor monopolize their access to the means of survival. If he did attempt to hoard social wealth, the members of the society could simply take it back and expel him; or worse.

Chiefs, like headmen, were also their societies' organizers in terms of warfare, outside trade and distribution of social resources. However, the chief (unlike the headmen who won their leadership positions based on their merit and generosity) enjoyed a hereditary status, lived better than the common people, and could lose his power only through defeat in war. The chief's power was however limited because he did not have the loyalty of a permanent police -- military apparatus that could permanently deny large numbers of the society from access to survival resources; such a permanent force is the glue that allows state-level societies to exist and preserves its ruling classes' elevated status and control over the society. In stratified state-level societies (whether feudalist, slave-owning or capitalist)

terrorizing the greater portion of the world's population. Now if anyone on the left other than myself has a problem with this overall situation, then the logical question becomes, in Vladimir Lenin's famous words, "What is to be done?"

Obviously the Fabian approach, which seems to have infected a vast portion of today's left leadership, of evolving socialism through words alone won't work, viz. educating away oppression through public meetings and lectures, publishing educational information, research, etc. It didn't work for the Fabians over a century ago and it doesn't work today. To digress for a moment, I've always found it ironic that the Fabian Society named themselves after Fabius Maximus Cunctator (cunctator meaning "delayer.") Fabius won acclaim as a Roman *military* commander, not as a pacifist educator. His accomplishments were those won on the battlefield through the use of successful, protracted guerilla tactics of evasion, harassment and attrition against the vastly superior Carthaginian Army during the second Punic War, which the Romans ultimately lost when, for lack of patience, Fabius was replaced with a commander who attempted to engage the Carthian Army in a decisive positional battle at Cannae. Now this is *not* to say that educating the masses has no place in struggle against empire – indeed it has a central and indispensable value – but it is to say that education alone (a small political approach) will not bring about a new mass-based social order.

Equally obvious is that random or spontaneous violence won't work. Anarchist youth prove this year after year when mobs of young rock-throwing Anarchist attempt to face-off in positional combat with riot police. The results are usually a bunch of sadistic pigs working over crowds of uncommitted combatants, leaving broken (sometimes dead) bodies and a flurry of arrests in their wake, along with a pretext to beef up their 'crowd control' arsenals for the next field exercise in cracking heads. This was all for the sadistic pleasure of the pigs and to the profit of police and military contractors. Similarly, this is *not* to denounce armed struggle – 'armed struggle' – but it is to say that disorganized violence and riots (a small military approach) also won't bring about a revolutionary new society, either.

My position here is definitely *not* to ridicule the efforts of educators and intellectuals nor young militants ("from each according to ability") but it is to point out the futility of half-measures and isolated efforts made in non-coordinated, non-result oriented fashion.

In order to approach a discovery of what forms of struggle *will* actually work, we must look at the nature of social power, and at historical and modern struggles and their degrees of success – especially what general tactics were applied and how feasible those tactics might be in the here and now. We must also look at the subjective factors (the mental processes of people) that allow people to submit to oppression or compels them to rise up against it.

In discussing social phenomenon, whether in relation to societies where the masses are in control or ones where hierarchies rule (monarchies or oligarchies,) one must speak in terms of those factors which make any society possible, viz. in political, economic and military terms. Politics are

constructed Greenville prison, because the prison to which I was then assigned would not allow me in the general population. One of the prisoners with whom I'd been in a knife fight in the jail had me listed as an enemy. He was in the population. On the third day the negotiator came with the line that I was being transferred to Greenville where I'd been requesting to go. Expecting a ruse, I declined to be handcuffed. Another prisoner, for whom I then had some respect, reasoned that the pigs might not be lying, since they knew that I could repeat the same and would not relent. He proposed that they might actually intend to transfer me. When the negotiator returned, I accepted the handcuffs and was promptly put on a van to Greenville.

What I was to encounter at Greenville defied anything that I'd expected. The pigs had a refined system and license for brutalizing prisoners. I was not to understand the magnitude of the situation until a few days after being there. The pigs had a tier of handpicked proxy prisoners, whom they used to violently suppress those who got out of line. The ringleader—I'll call him Pumpkin—was a career con with a reputation for butchering other prisoners. He had a trustee job (all trustees were similarly selected). Pumpkin was allowed by the pigs to keep weapons on his person. Part of the mental terror game was that while he was out cleaning (everyone knew he was a pig hit man and stayed armed), the pigs would bring others out around him in handcuffs (segregation prisoners must be handcuffed from behind when outside their cells, unless they have a trustee job, or are locked inside an exercise yard or shower stall). The she-pigs (guards and nurses) were the tools used to sic Pumpkin on others. He regarded and jealously guarded these she-pigs like actual mates, whereas all they did for him was bring him bubble gum, watch him masturbate in their presence, and flirt with him.

The set-up game usually went like this: one of these she-dogs would provoke an argument with the target (refuse him something he was due, etc.). She'd then report to Pumpkin that the target had "disrespected" her, or any of many other claims. Pumpkin would then come to the target's cell and start a hostile verbal exchange, send a challenge via third-party message, etc. Once the conflict was established, the pigs would move the target into the tier with Pumpkin and his cronies—the entire tier rode with him. The pigs would thoroughly search the target's property for weapons before moving him, to ensure that he had no means of defense. Once assigned to a

cell on Pumpkin's tier, the target was fair game. If he was stouthearted, he'd stand his ground. The next day or so the pigs would put them on the exercise yard together, remove everyone's handcuffs except the target's (they'd put five to seven prisoners in each pen), and allow them to mob attack the still handcuffed target. Or if they wanted him butchered, he'd be unhandcuffed and left to contend unarmed against a knife-wielding Pumpkin.

Upon my arrival at Greenville's segregation unit, they immediately used a she-pig to draw me out. There was no cooling system in the unit, so cups of ice were dispensed several times a day. On my first night in the unit, one of the she-pigs came through with

A Theory Towards Combating American Imperialism (Part One)

19

the ice, bypassing my cell, which led to harsh words when she ignored my queries as to why I'd been bypassed. She apparently went directly to Pumpkin and told him that I'd threatened her and him. I received a prompt third-party message from him that I'd have to live up to my threat. Knowing of no threat made, I asked to whom he was directing his message. The reply came back that it was clearly directed to me. At this point others on the tier explained what was going on with Pumpkin, the she-pigs, and the set-ups of unruly prisoners. I returned the message that I'd see to being assigned to his tier and that there was no need for further conversation. When I requested to be assigned to Pumpkin's tier the next day, the pigs declined. Apparently they'd never had a disruptive request to be housed on that tier. But they were predetermined to break me from the outset.

The next day a verbal exchange occurred between me and a unit pig, in response to his threatening another prisoner. The pig returned with a mob of guards under the pretext of conducting cell searches. They searched and trashed my belongings, returned me into the cell and closed the door. As I stood with my back to the door, waiting for them to remove the handcuffs, the pig yelled that I'd snatched the cuffs into the cell, pretending that he'd removed one cuff while the other was still attached to my wrist. With riot shield already on hand, the door was reopened and I was rushed to the back of the cell and beaten at length, still handcuffed from behind. When they were done, my face literally looked like the elephant man's. From that point on, it was war. I immediately graduated from fighting pigs with empty hands to using weapons. After allowing several weeks for my injuries to heal, and for them to lower their guard, I proceeded to hollering their bodies.

I reversed the terror game and ended with the entire unit (Pumpkin's tier being the one exception) riding with me against the pigs. An abuse of one was an abuse of all. Any pig that abused any worker was subjected to immediate attack. The pigs often brought me from the cells handcuffed while Pumpkin was working the floor. I'd walk past him, merely giving him a blank stare. He never made his move. He tried several times to send word to me, and to address me directly, contending that he hadn't sent me any message about me having to live up to any threat. He also denied allowing the pigs to use him to attack others. When I finally heard him out, I had to agree that I was not on his tier and thus had no personal knowledge of his actions or motives; the attacks he'd carried out against others he claimed were in response to their provoking him and not through anything involving the she-pigs. He expressed total respect for my position against the pigs. It boiled down to his word against every other prisoner's in the unit, and since I did not have personal knowledge--until later--of his working with the pigs, our conflict was dropped.

On account of our organized resistance to the pigs, their frequent attacks and abuses came to a total halt, and they attempted to pacify everyone on my tier. In segregation we are permitted only two telephone calls monthly; however, a telephone remained on our tier all day. Feces was no longer being found inside prisoners' meal trays (at that time protective custody inmates prepared the meal trays right in the unit. Each tray had the designated cell number written on

Although I'm often asked by progressive people -- people on the left of various stripes -- to express my ideas on concrete solutions to present social crises, I'm often reluctant. Not because I have any problems with expressing tactical ideas, but because it's proven in my experience that they don't actually intend to apply those ideas, or search ways in practice of proving, disproving or refining them. They seem only willing to engage in dialectics, mere verbal exchanges of ideas. Words. This tends to leave me somewhat exasperated since talking, educating with words alone, has repeatedly proven to be a futile method of mobilizing the common people to change the conditions that oppress them. Material problems demands material solutions. Indeed, is it likely that advances in material science would occur if all that scientists did was engage one another in conversations about physical phenomenon? Not at all. Scientific understanding of the laws of physical matter is developed through conducting physical experiments from which their theories are proven, disproven or refined.

While there is certainly no shortage of theorists, educators and critics in the American left, tactical thinkers, people willing and able to both proscribe and apply concrete solutions to concrete problems, seem nonexistent. (Is it any wonder that educators like Noam Chomsky express inability to comprehend Karl Marx's theory of dialectical materialism, and admit that they are not tactical thinkers?) Although I believe I understand why this is, understanding the problem does not solve it; and being confined as I am within the restrictive and isolated structure of a supermax prison cell, there isn't much I can do by way of action myself. So, it seems that I'm left to the very device that I've begun with criticizing -- words.

In my experiences I've learned something about many leftist social 'activists' in Amerika, which seems a general condition. They fear discipline and pain. The former tendency seems most pronounced amongst those of the anarchist stripe. Along with government, they also reject anything -- internal or external -- which tends to check their ability to simply do as they please, whereas, the latter tendency seems most typical among anti-imperialist, communist leadership elements, and peaceniks. The power structure has taught them that whenever they begin promoting and organizing activities that threaten the empire's holds on their minds and bodies of the common people, they will be isolated and destroyed with violence, and the masses pacified back into inanity.

Therefore the Anarchists spend much of their energy in disorganized activities (usually individualistic and egotistical) while the more potentially organized elements of the left spend their energy reclining safely in their intellectual hothouses engaging in dialectics on social phenomenon, history and the depravity of capitalism. Meantime, empire goes about its usual business of reaping vast profits for a tiny group of men through starving and dehydrating, imposing genocidal conditions, enslaving, mass-murdering, colonizing, making the planet increasingly inhabitable for, over-depleting and destroying limited natural resources, and generally

18

7-072



11

My response was to counter-ambush one of the pigs' other trustee hit men while he was out cleaning several days later. I was brought out for a legal phone call at which point--and to the escorting pig's sheer terror--I came out of the handcuffs, pulled out a concealed weapon, ran this crony of Pumpkin's down, and pushed holes through his neck and upper body. Once done with him, I walked up the tier (as the pigs retreated in the opposite direction) and back to my cell. When the cell door was quickly locked, I removed and flushed the cloth handle, washed the blade, broke the point of the blade off (wrapped it in a wad of toilet paper and flushed it also), and threw the remaining piece of benign metal out of the cell. I then took the curtain down which I'd put up to prevent view of my activities. The pigs stood outside the cell, uncertain of what, if anything, to do. They ultimately did nothing and left. I sent a message to Pumpkin, reestablishing our conflict. Several weeks later I was transferred to Meckdenberg prison, returning to the scene of past abuses. From the time of this last incident up until my transfer to Meckdenberg, the pigs' initiative was crushed; they were only more than solicitous of any and every

prisoners' requests, and were fawningly attentive to everyone.

During my stay at Mecklenburg, one of the ranking pigs who'd been instrumental in torturing me with the freezing strip cell treatment was ambushed. On this occasion I'd been strapped to the bunk by the pigs. In order for a prisoner to receive meals and toilet breaks while strapped down, the pigs must come into the cell, remove the chains and straps, and handcuff him. They will then leave the cell, close the door, and remove the cuffs through a hatch in the door. However, during this 1994 episode, when the pigs came in to release me for a toilet break, the claim is that I'd gotten out of the restraints and was lying on the bunk under a blanket as though still strapped down. When the ranking pig and two others moved to lift the blanket, I allegedly rose up, with weapon in hand, and attacked. Two of them (the ranking pig included) received multiple stab wounds, and the third pig received a cracked jaw. This incident, in its obvious preplanning and execution, left the pigs in such a quandary that no retribution followed. Indeed, I was several days later transferred to Buckingham and quickly released into the general population. By this time it was realized that I was not insane at all but calculating and determined. While prison administrators and those who proposed to "study" me from a distance put forward the fiction that I was inclined to "unprovoked" violence against the pigs, the pigs who dealt with me on a day-to-day basis knew, very clearly, that any violence from me was always in response to their own acts of violence or abuse of me or my peers. As long as the pigs remembered this, things went well, but there was always some lone pig with a cowboy complex who had to test his hand, and I'd answer it.

The majority of the pigs at Buckingham didn't want me in the population walking about. They therefore attempted several times through trumped-up reports to have me returned to segregation. On the last occasion that this was done, I was charged with being in an "unauthorized area" of the prison. The pigs waited until I'd locked into the cell at count time to come and lock me up in segregation. I refused to go peacefully. One pig threatened that if I didn't, I'd receive a severe "ass-whipping". In response I agreed to walk peacefully to segregation. When the pigs opened the cell door to escort me out, the threatening pig received a nose broken in two places. I've been in segregation ever since.

While in Buckingham's segregation unit, I observed a rookie pig slam a restrained prisoner's face into a steel door with no provocation. That same day I was accused of opening a gash in this pig's face with a razor blade.

A few days later the goon squad attacked another prisoner. This prisoner had a long gash in his arm with staples holding it closed. The nurses were to clean the wound and change the dressing twice daily. They refused to do so, and his arm became badly infected. The pigs refused to accept his emergency complaint seeking medical treatment. He finally broke a light in his cell to force some cooperation. The pigs' response was to send in the goon squad to beat him down.

My response was to kick and shatter the glass in my cell door. A K-9 unit was called in to assist the goon squad with me. Meantime

innovation and relentless commitment to an ideal has proven, to my satisfaction, that the oppressive institutions are not invulnerable. Fear is our greatest hindrance. Fear and half measures. They can isolate me, but they cannot isolate an ideal.

I have often defeated myself for lack of a broad vision. Because I had confined my efforts and ideas to this limited prison environment, I isolated myself from those on the outside. I had severed almost all outside contacts. I never expected to leave prison alive. However, I've come to realize that this relatively tiny prison environment, those concentrated islands of oppression (the condition within which I daily witness driving my peers helplessly into insanity), are a small interrelated part of a much greater oppressive whole. We prisoners must be reached and we must reach out. We must be educated into an understanding of our victim status, made to understand the function that the prisons serve, the nature of government in stratified capitalist societies. At the same time a much larger and totally committed effort must be made on the outside to confront the enemy power structure. This has been my message to the outside.

Now that I've begun interacting with people on the outside, the pigs have acted decisively to frustrate and discourage those contacts to isolate me. Many contacts have been broken, on account of these obstructions. I've been hindered in many commitments. The impediments have perhaps left some to think me unreliable at best, or an opportunist, or worse. They clearly don't understand my situation inside here--and why should they?--I've never explained it.

I am perceptive if anything and understand that there have been many defections, betrayals, infiltrations, provocations, pig agents, opportunists, and rewards in the left and other progressive movements. I can clearly understand why some very sincere people might become suspicious when I obligate myself to provide them something in writing or a piece of artwork and they hear nothing from me for months, because the pigs have been destroying and censoring my mail, taking my belongings and destroying my materials, and eliminating every channel through which I can acquire postage stamps (we must purchase all stamps from the prison commissary and cannot receive stamps from correspondents. On account of bogus fines and debts imposed against my prison account--several thousand dollars worth--any money sent to me is taken. I therefore cannot purchase stamps and must rely on other prisoners in this regard); I remain indefinitely barred from telephone use, etc.

While others' opinions of me are unimportant to me in the personal sense, I recognize the need for unity, loyalty, trust, and total commitment if any real struggle is to be waged. It's by the designs of the enemy order that masses and even progressive leaders are divided by fear, suspicion, and distrust. It is for this reason alone that I have made the effort to offer some insight into myself. I refuse to be party to my enemy's divisive designs.

I have nothing and therefore nothing to lose. I have conditioned myself for every conceivable shock and strain--physically, mentally, and emotionally. I fear nothing. I am deterred by no threat or prospect of danger; I've faced them all, continuously and by choice. I am willing

successful protracted struggle. They are living under the most primitive of conditions, with no economic infrastructure. (Open sewers, no garbage disposal, etc.) Gaza's economy is totally dependent upon day laborers and servants working in Israel proper. But under the organizing work of Hamas, their unrelenting resistance to Israeli forces is forcing the Israeli occupation and settlements out. The al-Quassam brigade (the clandestine military wing of Hamas) has only focused its attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers--the results of which can only be very limited. But did al-Quassam infiltrate and direct its efforts at Israel proper (at its economic base), and did Hama's political leaders not continue to entrust their ultimate political power to the corrupt and bootlicking Palestinian Authority and Yassir Arafat, they would crush Zionist oppression at its root. 16

Even with Hama's political and military errors, Israel still has proven to have *no military option* against Hamas; they can't infiltrate, neutralize, or contain al-Quassam. Yet Israel has much of the same military technology and hardware as the US--nukes and all. Hamas has won the greatest loyalty and a secure base amongst the people (e.g. building schools and hospitals, operating health clinics, schools, food distribution centers, etc., all freely available to the people), through developing a reputation of scrupulous honesty (in contrast to the corrupt Palestinian Authority), and overall serving the interests of the people of Gaza.

Al-Quassam is fighting with next to no modern resources, in only a 144 square mile area, yet Israel (the region's most powerful military force) admits inability to contend with Hamas. The US is 3½ million square miles in area, with relatively limitless logistical resources.

I have long been responsive to the suffering of others, now more so than ever. I've come to recognize that a primary cause of peoples' suffering the world over is in account of forces that the American left is in a position to contend with. But the left's leadership must overcome its fear, there must be a reconciliation reached, despite different schools of thought. The left must organize its forces and bring together its various educators and political workers and develop a party structure to coordinate the work of its disparate and isolated activists. The left must move forward with programs (economic, political, and military), which will displace those of the enemy. The establishment's prestige, its false sense of invulnerability, must be ripped away. Prestige must be vested in the masses themselves through the left's mobilizing, organizing, and building a mass-based infrastructure within the oppressed sectors of the working class. It must work toward deconstructing the false constructs of racism, which neutralizes the capacity of the working class to struggle together. And it must prepare for war.

I still endure repression at the hands of the pigs, as do my peers. I still take a principled stand against this repression. But above all else, I am working on bringing my peers into a principled consciousness which will give them discipline and a cause to struggle for, while simultaneously imparting to them the methods of struggle. The pigs' response continues to be to isolate me. Their violence has proven futile. Even in this most totalitarian of environments,

sarcastic negotiations were staged. I declined any conversation, which was what the pigs wanted, hoping for the opportunity to see me mutilated by the rottweiler. Several hours later all was ready. With the goon squad poised behind him, the dog handler, with one stick in one hand and K-9 at his feet, demanded me to submit to being handcuffed. I declined. When he unleashed the dog and ordered the cell door opened to admit the animal, the handler was promptly snatched into the cell, the dog run back out of the cell (clearing a path through the scattering pigs) and I came out on his heels flush into the crowd of pigs. (Some thirty or more pigs had gathered in the unit to watch the spectacle.) A battle ensued. I was swarmed by pigs and taken down in a flurry of punches. I was then transferred back to Powhatan and placed into a specially modified unit. 13

While in this unit I met another prisoner who had developed something of a reputation as a jailhouse lawyer and fighter of the pigs. Although many prisoners held him in high regard, I observed in him a predominant tendency to play prisoners against the pigs and vice versa, all to serve his own individual benefit. He only attacked and fought the pigs when they didn't cater to his ever-changing personal whims. This cat was one of the most crafty con artists and opportunists I was yet to meet. Crafty because he got results. I studied him and came to perceive through him that pigs fear the courts as much or more than they do direct action. Not because the courts will give any justice against them, but because the courts have the *power* to divest their wages. They fear what the courts *can* do as opposed to what the courts eventually *will* do. On this account, I saw that using the litigation process could be as tactically useful as direct action and with wider-reaching results. I also mistakenly believed that if we only learned how to navigate the courts correctly, litigation could produce continuous results in changing abusive conditions inside the prisons, as opposed to the mere temporary changes in pig conduct that my previous actions produced. Once I was packed off to another prison or unit, they'd simply return to abusing the prisoners as before. I would therefore learn to use both pen and sword.

From the end of 1994, I began studying Anglo-American law to the exclusion of all else. I studied each topic in the American Jurisprudence legal encyclopedia series, and read every law book I could lay my hands on from cover to cover. I had the entire tier getting the prison's attorney to copy articles from the various university law reviews. For years I'd strictly disciplined my mind and body through rigorous training and the conditions imposed on me by the pigs, to endure and absorb the most trying conditions. I learned the fundamentals of law in about eight months, and won the first suit I filed. I then studied all manner of books on trial tactics, influencing juries, etc. I entered the litigation process expecting that judges, when confronted with the law, would adhere to its letter. I couldn't have been more wrong. I appeared frequently in the courts--state and federal--for hearings and trials. Initially, I received routine compliments from judges--and grudgingly from defense attorneys--on my legal comprehension and ability. This all changed when I persisted in efforts to have the courts comply with the laws. I refused to accept

the unwritten rule that certain issues are not to be challenged or exposed.

My efforts were calculated to bring the courts to bear on DOC officials at the highest levels, to force them to change the conditions under which we lived, and conform them to the basic requirements of the written laws. The courts had other plans. The state courts were not willing to grant these sorts of relief, although the letter of the laws required it. They attempted instead, numerous times, to grant my release from prison. I completely distrusted these offers. To gain this relief, I'd basically have to admit that I was not entitled to the other relief I sought. By no stretch of the imagination did I think that the courts would allow me to walk free from prison. So I adamantly pressed for the relief I'd requested (which the judges were unwilling to grant) and argued myself out of court each time. I've been a fool many times.

When they refused the relief I demanded, I'd then turn my legal attacks against the judges, with the result of provoking their wrath. They then acted single-mindedly to shut me out of the courts. This process spanned from about 1995 through 2001. With the added psychological deterrent of litigation, my clashes with the pigs declined somewhat in frequency. They focused primarily on isolating me from others. Isolating me from others, their efforts to perpetuate a discontinuity in our unity, has been the pigs' only effective weapon against me. And they've admitted in a thousand ways that their greatest fear is ending up with many other prisoners on their hands who think and act as I do. Their isolating me was long a tactic that I could not devise an effective countermeasure against, that is, until after 2001, when I was first exposed to revolutionary theory and have since come to understand the role of ideology. Without a unifying ideology, there can be no unity of struggle. Ideology was something I'd never had, and thus something I could not share. The prisoners who'd united in struggle with me had done so *because* of me. Not because of a shared principle. Therefore, when I was no longer around, they lost the initiative to struggle on, and the pigs were free to resort to their old oppressive acts.

With the beginnings of my studies in revolutionary history and theory in 2001, litigation and my isolated clashes with the pigs paled in importance. My first exposure to revolutionary ideas came with my meeting Hanif Shabazz-Bey in 2001. Hanif is a political prisoner who is apparently well known within prison movement circles. Upon meeting we developed an instant affinity. He began sending me a variety of publications through which I was first exposed to the works of George Jackson.

I'd heard of George in passing and had been compared with him many times on account of my militancy. But somehow I'd never come across his writings, nor any other progressive material for that matter. My first reading of George was *Blood in my Eye*. Reading this book allowed me to see that the oppressive conditions within these prisons, indeed, the very existence of them could not be changed absent a fundamental change of the social economic conditions that created them. I had not been thinking in terms of abolishing prisons themselves (for me such an idea was not even conceivable). What I'd

been trying to produce was nothing more than a reform in their internal conditions. Was instinctively opposed to the pigs because of their organized brutality and systematic oppression of disempowered people. But I'd never questioned the inherently oppressive role of the pig in society, his function in preserving the interests and ruling power of the haves over the have-nots. For all this time I'd accepted the legitimacy of the established order.

If I agreed with George (and I did) that the order of capitalist society *is* illegitimate, then it was necessary to determine what order *is* legitimate, and *how* to get from here to there. I've always been a practical person, extremely so, and therefore I recognized, along with George, that merely talking about a better world, and criticizing the present one, will not produce the desired change. He'd summed it up quite clearly. Economics is the base of society, the rock of social power. Whatever class controls the economic arrangements controls the social order. The military (including police and prisons) and political institutions are the forces which preserve and protect that dominant class's controlling power over the society. It is therefore necessary to destroy those institutions in order to break that class's hold on the society. And this can *only* be done by a revolutionary, mass-based, economic, political, *and* military struggle. Focusing on only one of these components will change nothing. Any valid struggle must incorporate all three of them. I suspected that a study of past revolutionary struggles and their ultimate failures would show that they did not succeed because one or more of these components was neglected or compromised. I had to study further.

I became engrossed in acquiring and studying all that George had studied and more, which included the classics and not-so-classics: Vladimir Lenin, Mao Ze Dong, Karl Marx, Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah, Che Guevara, Rosa Luxemburg, Harry Magdoff, Paul Sweezy, Albert Szymanski, bell hooks, Cornell West, Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, Vo Nguyen Giap, etc., etc. I investigated the various revolutionary schools of thought—Communism, Anarchy, New Afrikan, Feminism, and other left-leaning theories. I studied military thinkers and military history, sociology and history, political science, economic theories (left and right), revolutionary history, etc. and I am still studying, refining my views, and testing them in practice.

The more I studied, reflected, practiced, and drew insight from my own practical experiences, the more it all fell together, so clear and obvious. As my conceptualizations developed I wrote a few essays, usually at others' requests, (my ideas were still forming, some I could not clearly articulate, so I adopted terms, thoughts, and ideas. But it was all quickly coming together.) I could see where the failures and successes had occurred in various anti-colonial, class, anti-racist, feminist, and anti-imperialist struggles.

In answer to those pessimistic about waging a successful revolutionary struggle here in the military stronghold of the global imperialist system, I found inspiration in one seemingly insignificant area of the Middle East. Gaza City. The Palestinians in Gaza, suffering under a brutal Israeli military occupation, are waging a heroic