

If you are wondering what you can do, you can write and show your solidarity. For the price of a 37¢ stamp you can write to each prisoner at the addressees listed below.

Expressions of solidarity with the Cuban Five can be sent to:

1. RENÉ GONZALEZ
SECHWERET
Reg. #58738-004
P.O. Box 725
F.C.I. Edgefield
Edgefield, SC 29824

2. ANTONIO GUERRERO
RODRIGUEZ
#58741-004
U.S.P. Florence,
P.O. Box 7500,
Florence, Co 81226

3. GERARDO HERNANDEZ NORDELO
#58739-004
U.S.P. Victorville
P.O. Box 5500
Adelanto, CA 92301

4. FERNANDO GONZALEZ
(Note: Please address envelope
to Ruben Campa and the letter
to Fernando)
Rubén Campa
#58733-004
F.C.I. Oxford
P.O. Box 1000
Oxford, WI 53952-0505

5. RAMÓN LABAÑINO SALAZAR
(Note: Please address envelope to
Luis Medina and the letter to
Ramón)
Luis Medina
#58734-004
U.S.P. Beaumont
P.O. Box 26030
Beaumont, TX 7772-6035



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ISSUE #3



To make matters worse, family visits are complicated for the Five. To have to be separated from loved-ones is heart-wrenching; combine that with the isolation of being incarcerated in a country that is not even your own. The United States government is prohibiting the wives of two of the Cuban Five entry into the United States to visit their husbands. Olga Salanueva, wife of René González, and Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández seek entry into US only for family visits.

"The children are extremely anxious to see their father. They are growing up quickly without sharing enough time together. All summer long they waited to see him, and now school has started. I can't tell you how sad they were not to visit him," said Elisabeth Palmeiro wife of Ramón Labañino. Since Labañino's imprisonment, the United States has granted the family permission to visit him only four times in six years. She and their children have waited almost a year to be granted a new entry visa.

René González's six-year-old daughter Ivette has not seen her father in four years. Ivette is a US born citizen, but because her mother Olga Salanueva is denied entry, she is also unable to see her father.

The situation is continued with all four of the surviving mothers of the Cuban Five. It took one solid year before Irma Sehwerert, the mother of René González, received her visa to visit her son in September 2004. Mirta Rodríguez, mother of Antonio Guerrero, has been waiting for almost a year for the US Interests Section in Havana to grant her permission to see her son. One can only imagine the loneliness and sense of despair that can happen when one feels isolated.

For Christmas, this writer sent Antonio Guerrero an artist's sketch pad. One of the guards obviously showed some mercy and allowed him to receive it, as they are not allowed to receive presents from the outside world. For me, that was the best Christmas present ever - it gave me more pleasure to give it an greater joy knowing how much my friend appreciated it. It taught me that the amount of money one spends on a gift does not determine its importance, for that gift only cost about five dollars. The lesson that this writer learnt from my friend is the value of giving, that it truly is more blessed to give than to receive, and for that lesson, this writer is truly grateful.

*** This zine was edited by Anthony Rayson, on 9-27-05. Many educational & therefore revolutionary publications are available through my distro. Increasingly, censors in the gulags are ordered to reject these types of empowering and educational materials. It's the same old story - the "masters" do not want their "slaves" to learn, comprehend and apply the truth to their lives. Supporters on the "outs" in "minimal" security should challenge this suppression and support those under-going repression because of their courageousness.**

Let us take a quick moment to review the history of terrorism against Cuba, which will help to put the Case in perspective. In 1976 there was the bombing of a Cuban civilian plane that killed 73 innocent people, including Cuba's entire Olympic fencing team. In 1977 there was the bombing campaign in Havana, which involved 10 bomb attacks aimed at civilians in places of international tourism. An Italian tourist was killed as were several others injured. **50**

Raul Cruz-Leon, a Salvadoran national was convicted and confessed the Cuban-American National Foundation paid him, the sum of \$3,000 for each bomb he planted. Equally well known was the attempt to assassinate Cuban president Fidel Castro in an auditorium filled with university students in Panama on November 18, 2000.

These actions and hundreds similar attacks by groups like Alpha 66, Brigada 2506, Brothers to the Rescue, Comandos F4, Cuban-American National Foundation and Omega 7, since 1959, have conducted bombings, assassinations and other sabotage and have caused the deaths and injuries to literally hundreds of innocent people. Clearly the Cuban government had no alternative but to try and stop these attacks, which was precisely the Cuban Five's mission.

Months before the arrest of the Five, the Cuban government turned over to the FBI, a dossier summarizing evidence gathered on the Miami-based 40-year campaign of murder, bombings, arson and other attacks against Cubans. At an historic meeting in Havana, the Cubans pleaded with US law enforcement officials to act on that evidence to end the terrorism. The FBI promised it would help. Instead, in 1998, the FBI arrested the source of the information, the five Cubans, rather than going after the perpetrators or those funding terrorist activities.

Miami TV Channel 41 broadcast a show in which known paramilitaries, including Rodolfo Frometa, leader of the infamous Florida-based Comandos F4, openly spoke of their preparation for an attack on Cuba and their efforts to bring down Venezuela's President Chávez by force. Oscar Asa, the nephew of former Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, hosted the program. Batista was responsible for the murder of thousands of Cubans until revolutionary forces in 1959 forced him out.

This program re-aired in Cuba under the name Round Table and was hosted by Randy Alonso who requested viewers to form their own opinions after viewing the program. Alonso remarked that the message that Frometa gave was clear: "his paramilitary organization was ready and trained - it just needed the money." Alonso continued, "The money is there - \$36 million recently earmarked by the US government to support such groups."

It is illegal in the US to defend terrorist actions on television or radio. The promotion of the assassination of another nation's leader is also illegal under the US Neutrality Act. Nonetheless, commented round table participants, these men were able to flagrantly sit in a studio dressed in military fatigues and discuss the different armaments they were using to train paramilitaries to attack Cuba.

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Everything we do in the Flash Point News is to help spread the information given to us by Johnny Liberty. This is why this newsletter is not for profit and advanced by prisoners of war (POW) to help Americans rediscover their sovereign rights. The Missouri Prisoner Labor Union wants prisoners to be able to receive wages that would afford them the opportunity to help support the children they left behind, to pay restitution, to save a little money so they would have a fresh start upon release, and so many other things that need to be addressed. Yet, prisoners like everyone else need to be educated to understand that asking for higher prison wages is nothing more than placing a bandage over a wound that continues to bleed. The prison system is a part of a larger corporate federal and state operated system. Johnny Liberty having never worked for the government, corporations or a university, maintained his intellectual independence and taught that sovereignty is the central concept around which all other political, economic, legal, and social systems revolve.

We must teach MPLU members that we the PEOPLE cannot be effective Citizens without embracing and comprehending these issues and revealing the "invisible tyranny" that dominates our lives. The Michigan Flash Point News is not your run-of-the-mill zine. While the MPLU "Off The Hook" newsletter shall be more direct concerning the aims and objectives of MPLU, it would make little sense for the MI-MPLU to repeat the same thing as MPLU. The staff decided that since MI-MPLU is a subsidiary publication that we would focus on the levels of reclaiming our sovereign Citizenship and restoring our unalienable rights, but ultimately for our human, environmental and planetary survival once we are released from prisons across the country. One has to have an open mind and a willingness to be re-educated where political and economic facts bear witness that things in our country are not as one has been lead to believe.

It has often been said that the truth is stranger than fiction. The truth certainly is far more complex and interesting than the simple-minded thinking that dominates intellectual behavior, and most political/religious activity that we see and hear around us today. Challenge yourself to think for yourself and make your own conclusions. Dialogue, dissent and disagreement must be encouraged in a truly free society. Never surrender your mind and freewill over to another human in the name of organization, religion or anything else that was created only as a means to help keep you grounded and humble towards other humans.

Editor of The Michigan MPLU Chapter
Flash Point News

Cheikh El-Malik Amun Ra' Iuemhetep Beyah®

by: Kwaja Adisa Oluqbala

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Some comrades were shocked to discover i do not support a blanket "buy Black" policy, considering i am a staunch New Afrikan nationalist. They were even more shocked to discover i would, in certain situations, patronize others' businesses even if a New Afrikan business offered superior quality in product and a lower price. This is because buy Black, in and of itself, is discharged of any obligation to place people before profit.

Buy Black and similar slogans do not challenge u.s. capitalism or its attendant social value system: Profit Before People. Neither does it answer the question posed by Huey P. Newton over thirty years ago i.e., "How can we say that we have accomplished revolution if we redistribute the wealth just to the [New Afrikan] people here in North America when the ruling circle itself is guilty ... [T]hey have taken away the goods of the people of the world, transported them to America and used them as their very own?" The question remains relevant today.

We are told by the New Afrikan capitalist (most of them loathe that term) that if we spend our money with them, that somehow that act itself will translate into control over the neighborhoods in which we live.

We are told that as a group, with marginalized financial influence, who live in an economic environment monopolized by a small band of corporate juggernauts, we can transform our relationship to that economic system if we buy Black.

At no time are we told that the present economic system can and should be changed. That it is in our best interest, and that of most people in the world, that we labor for that change. Instead, if not outright, it is consistently implied that the present economic order is beyond reproach. Therefore, we better get in where we fit in.

New Afrikan entrepreneurship nor buy Black has benefited the New Afrikan masses -- or the hundreds of millions of exploited and oppressed people throughout the world whose misery and death subsidize the u.s. standard of living. Our poverty is relevant, not absolute. In the u.s. poverty means hardships. In the so-called third world countries poverty means death. We got to keep that our front. There are over one billion people who subsist on less than \$1 a day, courtesy of u.s. corporate economic, financial and military institutions.

New Afrikan businesses derive their financial flow from the larger corporate economic and financial institutions, not from economic independence. For example, a New Afrikan grocery chain would go out of business almost immediately if the agricultural monopolies stop delivering food. We do not own the farms, processing, packaging, and distribution network to keep such a business afloat (or any business for that matter). And just like any other capitalist, no money no food, regardless of how dire one's situation may be.

Given the dependency of New Afrikan businesses on the benevolence of the u.s. corporate structure, rather we buy Black or not, the fate of these businesses are firmly in the hands of Wall Street and the world of finance capitol.

Most of us do not understand the difference between economics and financial matters. There is a difference. No way i can define either term in a manner that will please everyone, so i will not try. However, in the broadest sense, economic is a macro term, dealing with the economy as a whole i.e., how an economy functions -- the dominant mode of production, distribution and consumption . . . Buying a candy bar or selling a car may ultimately have an impact on the economy, but, these transactions are not economic in and of themselves. They are financial.

Financial matters are micro in essence. They show the cause and effect relationships involving prices, industry and commerce, work, and pay, the exchange of goods services, etc. They do not determine the economic environment, they respond to it. For example, a bank represents a financial institution, the Federal Reserve represents an economic institution. The former, no matter how lucrative its dealings might be, derives its power from the latter. Buy Black does not create economic power. At best, it will create some form of financial influence.

required to register as agents of a foreign power. Many comrades were jailed for conspiracy to commit espionage. Gus Hall, former chair of the Communist Party, USA and one-time presidential candidate, said that he was jailed for "thinking about teaching dangerous thoughts."

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Traditionally, prosecutors use a conspiracy charge in political cases. The legal definition of conspiracy is: "an agreement between people to commit a substantive crime." Conspiracy is an undeveloped crime (such as "attempt" or "solicitation"), so making the agreement is enough to be held criminally responsible, even if the crime agreed to is not committed. By using the charge of conspiracy, the government, in essence, relieves itself of the burden of proof. Once the burden of proof is lifted, all the government has to prove to a jury is that there was an agreement to do the crime. Anyone charged with conspiracy would be convicted even if the crime were never actually committed.

In the case of the Five, the Miami jury was asked to find that there was an agreement to commit espionage. The government never had to prove that espionage actually happened. It could not have proven that espionage occurred. None of the Five sought nor possessed any top-secret information or US national defense secrets. Yet, three of the Five were convicted of entering into an agreement to commit espionage. And that is what the government sought to convince a jury drawn from Miami: "Although we can't prove it, there certainly must have been an agreement to do it."

The sentence for the conspiracy charge is the same as if espionage were actually committed and proven. The other defendants were convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage, despite the fact the US government itself admitted during the trial that there was no proof whatsoever of espionage.

Ordinarily, if five people caught in the US were working for another country, they would simply be returned to their home country. This is especially true if, like the Five, they were not armed and did not inflict injury or property damage. However, in this instance three of the Five are doing life and two are doing very long prison terms. That kind of hostile treatment is reserved solely for the Cuban Revolution.

Daily we are bombarded on television with news report on the "war on terror." We are led to believe that this is a battle over our very souls, a battle of good versus evil. We are told: "our great nation is leading the way for the world to follow 'democracy and freedom.'" How can we claim to laud freedom? These reports would allow ourselves to believe that we are freedom's guardian. We need to understand that there is a double standard regarding terrorism here in the United States.

The Cuban people have been victims of terror attacks by Miami-based terrorist organizations, many of whom came from the wealthy class that left Cuba after the popular overthrow of dictator Fulgencio Batista, while others within the movement were former police thugs within the Batista regime.

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Travesty of Justice: The Imprisonment of the Cuban Five

By Michael Adam Reale

Re-Print from Political Affairs

Despite the Bush administration's claim that Cuba supports terrorism, Cuba has been on the forefront of the struggle to end terrorism. The case of the Cuban Five anti-terrorist fighters is an example. The Cuban Five is a group of men who came to the United States in the early 1990s in response to the waves of terrorist directed at Cuban civilians by mercenary terrorist groups from the Cuban exile community in southern Florida. The names of the Cuban Five are Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González.

This writer became more familiar with their plight through correspondences with one of these men, Antonio Guerrero. Through these letters a friendship has developed. The US government sent Guerrero to one of the harshest prisons in the country with the intention that he would be mistreated by the other prisoners. But like Nelson Mandela, he has managed to become admired by his fellow inmates and has inspired many, both within the confines of his walls and without. Antonio is a teacher within the prison and once when he was in solitary confinement, his students went on strike to protest his confinement.

The Cuban government sent Guerrero and his comrades to the United States armed with neither malice toward the United States nor its people. Although they have not harmed anyone, they are in prison, while the anti-Cuban terrorists whom they tried to stop are free. The sole purpose was to infiltrate the network of terrorist groups that had been attacking Cuba since the victory of the Cuban revolution. The Five were successful in infiltrating the Cuban-American groups and reporting the warnings to the Cuban government of the plans being developed to attack Cuban civilians.

The five Cubans were convicted in US federal court on June 8, 2001 in a politically charged trial. The government of the United States claimed they were engaged in espionage on US military bases and threatened "national security." The espionage charges - and related charges - were completely without foundation. In 14,000 pages of transcript, there was no espionage evidence ever introduced. These five men are imprisoned in federal penitentiaries for simply defending their homeland from terrorist acts by Cuban-American groups within the United States. Three were sentenced to 15 years, and two received life sentences.

They were prosecuted on charges such as conspiracy to commit espionage as well as failure to register as foreign agents. This is interesting because this was the very same charges leveled at Communist Party members and was the reason why communists were imprisoned until about the mid-1980s. When the Soviet Union was still around, communists were also

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New Afrikans patronizing the business of other New Afrikans permits us to appear concerned with the nation, i mean it sounds good; but in the final analysis what does it really do? It definitely does not aid us in controlling New Afrikan communities. That is because New Afrikans do not live in communities, we live in neighborhoods. There is a quantum of difference between the two.

Geographically there is no difference, communities consist of neighborhoods. But in communities, the people who live in those neighborhoods control the institutions that affect them. And through these institutions they express/execute their economic, political and social concerns. Communities represent a substantial degree of power, unity, focus and collective effort. Neighborhoods are the epitome of powerlessness, disorganization, obfuscation and crude competition. This is what it means to live in the "hood." It means to be powerless, to have no control over the institutions that determine our social position.

Liberation for New Afrikans and the full realization of our humanity is impossible under the current economic power relationships. Changing those relationships must be our focus.

For starters, how products are produced and by whom needs to be addressed. U.S. business are in the business of making a profit, as big a profit as possible. We must be in the business of meeting needs. So what we produce, retail or services we provide should primarily cater to needs, immediate needs.

It is imperative we become well versed in state and federal laws which regulate the particular industry we partake of, in order to keep them out of our business, as much as possible. We must stay away from banks. Loans should be made direct from our collective coffer or direct to one another. We can manage our money as well as any bank. Besides, we do not know what the bank is doing with our money. Our money could be used to finance horrible crimes against humanity. Though their activities are considered legal, banks are some nefarious institutions.

Whenever possible, it is best to barter. Wane ourselves off the use of Federal Reserve notes. Every time we accept a Federal Reserve note we incur a debt; and when we pass along Federal Reserve notes we pass along a debt. Contrary to Fed' sponsored rhetoric, a barter system will work. It will not be simple, but it is possible. The barter system worked for thousands of years and can be modified to work today. If we are not using Federal Reserve notes it severely limits the restraints placed on our economic activities. That is right, economic. We must not be in the mind frame of starting businesses, but of the mind frame of building a provisional economy.

As far as our international friends are concerned, we got to deal directly with them, no third parties. We must purchase raw materials (and some finished) direct so that we know under what conditions they were procured or manufactured. As well as placing our know-how and labor at their disposal.

New Afrikans in the U.S. have more skills than most other neo-colonized, so-called underdeveloped or developing nations in the world. They should be maximized. Historically, New Afrikan skills have been expropriated by U.S. industries, not benefiting New Afrikans in any substantial manner. *George Washington Carver, Benjamin Banneker, Dr. Charles Drew, William Lambert* and countless others were major inventors, however, we do not benefit from their genius. That must change.

Our Businesses must re-invest in the people. Not some kind of charity, but, all "profit" outside keeping the business going must go into programs that liberate the nation. Why buy Black if the individual/group does not reinvest in those that buy their products or if there is no commitment to struggle with the people? If industries of a conspicuous social nature continue to be viewed as private property? How can a grocery store or hospital be viewed as private property?

No one should ever be hungry or ailing from preventable diseases when food and medicine sits in abundance in silos and warehouses. I mean people are not hungry because of a food shortage. People go hungry because profit is valued over people. By people i am not just referring to New Afrikans or people who reside in the U.S.

It is the people of the world whose labor and resources have been stolen to produce the products we consume. "Buy Black," has to take responsibility for that -- for fighting to change that. I do not endorse a carte blanche policy to buy Black. We got to demand something in return.

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We have been socialized to tolerate almost unbearable and unimaginable atrocities. Buy Black continues that socializing process. If it does not create and increase New Afrikan consciousness; if it does not pursue New Afrikan independence and independence of oppressed people all over the world, in the end it will have no impact on the economic and political subordination of our people and people throughout the world.

I do not want to be oppressed or exploited by anyone, so-called Black, White or otherwise. If someone or group profits from our ignorance, misery or vulnerability, they are the enemy. Period!

Rebuild To Win!

COMMUNITY INFLUENCE ON INCARCERATION AND DESTRUCTION OF OUR PEOPLE

by: SHEIK MARK S. MOORE EL
NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF MPLU

In the past twenty years the African American people has shown apprehension and reluctance to vigorously consider the reality of what we know and believe about the cause/factor accounting for the high rate of crime in Asiatic-African American Communities. This is the inescapable truth displayed before your very presence that a substantial number of Asiatic-African American youngsters are shown to be more and more agents of destruction in the Asiatic-African American Community. They are blame worthy in a sense for being the impetus of the deteriorating quality of life and well being of the Asiatic-African Community. There's an abundance of evidence we can point to that may incline some of us to want to try to excuse this aspect of negative Asiatic-African American behavior. This is not normal as should be expected from our children. But the truth remains that many of our streets are dangerous and the quality of human life in the Asiatic-African American Community is marginalized into a state of being constantly threatened by young Asiatic-African American who do not have a healthy social conscience that serves as the basis of community life.

We need to address this matter that we are faced with. Our young Asiatic-African American children are dying or going to prison more and more each year; this is not good for our youth or the people of their community. If you would ask most mothers and grandmothers of those in prison or dead, they will tell you of what they know and how their children and grandchildren who are caught up in crime resulting in death.

We are not discussing with each other what we need to do to change this perception of our experience. Sometimes a people may actually believe that some of their problems are so big and bad, that they cannot do anything to reduce or solve them. In those types of situations we sometimes close our eyes and leave those types of things in the hands of others, who we think can handle those problems better than we can. In dealing with our children and the persisting drug and crime epidemic, we have simply turned our children over to the Criminal Justice System that does not work for the most part, in assisting our children in improving the quality of their lives, thinking, or behavior.

The Asiatic-African American community has given in to being satisfied that, the prison system warehouses the members of our community. What do the people of the community know about these new high-tech modern day plantation systems we call prisons? This is a dilemma that the people of our community should investigate and be straight forward about. The prison system has gone from twenty-five (25%) people of color in 1930 through 1960; to sixty eight (68%) percent today. But the Asiatic-African American community only represent just over twelve (12%) percent of the population here in the United States.

The United States Prison System for the most part, does not help prisoners during their incarceration. Does not help the addicted, under-educated, mentally ill nor provide reform.



"By far the sharpest fighting ideology in Portuguese Africa - and indeed in the whole continent - is Amílcar Cabral...."

John Garrahi

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The most significant components of the International Power structure are "invisible" and inaccessible to We the People (e.g. Trilateral Commission (TC), Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA), Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), Bilersbergers, Bohemian Club , The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) owns and controls most of the world media cartels and is a private club for recruiting international bankers, top government officials and CEO's of top corporations. Every American President since FDR (including Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George Bush and Bill Clinton have been recruited and funded by the CFR, and other international and domestic organizations intent on global domination and control. Presidential elections and governments have long since been bought and sold. If voting made any difference in the outcome of an election, they would have made them illegal a long time ago. Just look at George Bush, Jr., and his last two elections.

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It should be mentioned that prison has fostered the illusion that some of our people are better off in prison. This type of thinking and ideas by the people shows a lack of a strong support system in the community for prisoners, and this is where that illusion is dispelled by the reality that the Asiatic-African American community is faced with addressing this dilemma because it will not just go away.

Communities must be supporters for our children, because our children are ours and from our communities and if we don't do the right things by them now, our communities will regret it. We must find a way to inspire, and provide incentive to the people in our communities to be willing to get involved for our children sake.

The Bush Administration has totally eliminated the prison availability to prisoners for these programs. Our children need to have job opportunities upon release from prison. I cannot stress this enough. We all have to understand that the people of the communities opinion is the voice to improve the qualities of our children's lives; but only if we come together and produce credible and reliable interest for our children and launch these interest collectively and work at resolving our problems to work together with our children having a voice before they reenter society.

nor does this government support all of the PEOPLE. Yet, if we do not address this issue effectively and soon, none of us will ever be seriously respected by each other as a group of PEOPLE. Yet, if we do not address these issues effectively we will be the continuance of the injustice that is being imposed upon our children in our communities.

This is the dilemma that the PEOPLE should wage a national protest against the blatant injustice, discriminatory, and disparage practices that target's our children to fill prisons. The socially entrapment affecting them of crime, drugs, and prisons which has determined the quality of our children's respect to those issues.

These are the issues that we need to address; the matters dealing with our children and surrounding the negative circumstances into positive issues.

ON PRISON AND "FREE" SOCIETY

by Rashid

Throughout our childhood we are conditioned to believe that life's reward can be found in toys and tokens. As we grow older, these notions of pursuing pacifiers are reinforced commercially; only the toys become bigger, more complex, and cater to more "adult" appetites. We thus become content with, and conditioned to, a life of class and economic competition for subsistence, and for mass-produced toys and tokens from the industrial flea market.

In "free" society (what I call "minimum custody") there are simply more toys than in prison (Maximum custody); more manufactured objects and imagery to divert those in plutocratic capitalist slavery. i.e., bread and circuses still appeased.

As for us in Maximum custody, we are marginalized, demonized, and ostracized, and thereby cut off from the masses "out there" in minimum custody. We are stripped of voice and force, socially, economically, and politically; therefore, the ruling elite's state enforcer can shed their pretensions, and control us with more direct force and terror than what might be tolerated by those in minimum custody, where the masses cannot be so easily contained.

Those in minimum custody who do recognize an unsatisfactory existence, still perceive themselves as better off than us in Maximum custody, and greatly advantaged in comparison to the Third World. They then accept the terms of their lesser confinement for fear of losing their perceived social "privileges"; much the same incentive by which children are induced to "behave".

Who indeed can say they have never violated any of the innumerable laws of the authoritarian state? We are all criminals in this regard (whether intentionally or not). Yet we permit ourselves to be alienated against our peers who have suffered the indignity of having been caught.

At the same time we glamorize, idolize, and romanticize "criminal" characters and elements brought to us by the entertainment industry.

I cannot count the times I have heard prison guards repeat to us in Maximum custody, "I am no different from you, I just have never been caught."

Power structures take full advantage of the inside knowledge of the law for their own economic and political self-interest. Power structures derive their sovereignty from either a Monarch or Pope, a legal "person" like a Trust, or by operating in a offshore jurisdiction of law (Admiralty/Maritime). Power structures act upon their own authority with full reservation of rights. They are intent upon competing for total control and ownership of the economic infrastructure, in order to create a global empire—the New World Order.

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America experience a gut feeling they are being grossly deceived, misinformed and used by Power structures that operate behind the scenes of the autocratic media and big government. They know someone is pulling the puppet strings of the America democratic system, but can't quite figure out who or why. We the People are unknowingly the "economic slaves" of sovereign Power structures that control our global economic and political systems, encroaching upon our personal lives and choices more pervasively than ever.

H.L. Mencken said: "No government is ever in favor of freedom of the individual. It invariably seeks to limit that freedom, if not by overt denial, then by seeking to constantly widen its own functions... All governments, of course, are against liberty..."

As having stated before, some of the American Power structures is visible through the institutions it operates: Federal Reserve Banking System (FRB), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC), Wall Street Attorneys and State Bar Associations, Attorney Generals, Department of Justice, administrative tribunals and equity/admiralty courts, Certified Public Accountants (CPAs), Food & Drug Administration (FDA), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), cooperating local and State police Agencies, prison systems, transnational corporations, federal, State, county and municipal governments.

Power structures design and lobby for legislation, rules & regulations, insurance and licensing requirements primarily for their own self-interest. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has nothing whatsoever to do with "free trade," but is designed to compromise the sovereignty of Canada, Mexico and the United States. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is also necessary for the Power structure to compromise the sovereignty of the 116+ member nations and place them all under the "control" of the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Agency for International Development (AID), and the World Bank (WB).

Finally, Power structures funnel subsidies into the industries, schools, research institutions, prime contractors, and transnational corporations that afford them the most leverage and support the policies that perpetuate their self-interest. Power structures buy politicians wholesale, at quantity discounts, to legislate their own agendas. It's no accident that the District of Columbia (D.C.) is overrun with 30,000 foreign lobbyists influencing money-hungry elected officials to vote for policies sympathetic with the interests of the Power structure, both foreign and domestic.

The Bavarian Illuminati was founded (May 1, 1776) by Dr. Adam Weishaupt, a professor of Canon Law at Ingolstadt University. "He formed a secret society called the 'Order of the Illuminati' within the existing Masonic lodges of Germany... In 1785, the Illuminati were suppressed by the Bavarian government for allegedly plotting to overthrow all the Kings in Europe and the Pope to boot. "Sounds like the kind of folks the usA founding fathers fared well with."

The Illuminati and the freemasons collaborated for awhile then split ranks. After the headquarters of the Illuminati were raided by the Bavarian government, the Illuminati operated under the cover of the League of the Just. Karl Marx was hired to update the writings of Weishaupt which resulted in the Communist Manifesto (1848). The League of the Just became the League of the Communists. The House of Rothschild was involved in the founding of this partly religious, partly political movement, which Nicholas Lenin was also a member. The Russian Revolution (1917) was founded by both American and European international banking families. When Nikita Khrushchev visited the United States, he boasted that the Communists would bury usA citizens and that their grandC.hildren would live under Communist rule. This may be the prophesy of the day coming true before our eyes.

Nikita Khrushchev wrote: "You Americans are so gullible. No, you won't accept Communism outright, but we'll keep feeding you small doses of socialism until you'll finally wake up and find you already have Communism. We won't have to fight you. We'll so weaken your economy until you'll fall like overripe fruit into our hands."

There exists a lot of academic research detailing the "Who's Who" of the Power structure. The names and faces [at this point] are not as important as the generalized principles of how sovereign Power structures operate based on visible actions taken on their behalf. That there is an "invisible" aspect of all Power structures, sovereign powers operating behind the scenes of the storefront bank, corporations and nation-states, pulling the puppet strings of the "visible" aspect of the Power structure.

For the most part, with the exception of natural law, Power structures are not playing by the same set of rules the rest of us are obliged to. For example, the U.S. Congress has exempted itself from numerous statutory laws that apply to U.S. citizens. These exemptions include: Civil Rights Act of 1964, Freedom of Information Act of 1974, Ethics in Government Act, Family and Medical Leave Bill, OSHA and SSA. Communist Party leaders had also exempted themselves from the oppression reaped upon the common people.

Power structures are not motivated by some higher moral order of authority. They do not adhere to superior ethical standards of behavior, nor do they act on behalf of the public interest of the ordinary Citizen in America, or elsewhere in the world. Power structures are not loyal to any particular government or nation state, not compelled to obey the mandates of American Common law, the Constitution for the usA, Bill of Rights, or International law, except when it serves their own best self-interest.

"Legal" advertisements solicit us to buy the fastest automobiles, while all routes we travel have reduced "legal" speed limits. They confound us by tempting and tantalizing our desires, and then criminalizing the expression thereof.



The difference between Maximum and minimum custody? In Maximum we are regimented by overt terror and force (quite like Orwell 1984), while in minimum the regimentation is with mentally debilitating pacifiers (quite like Huxley's Brave New World).

The similarity? We are all doing time.

Marxist IQ

1. In their writings on Czarist Russia, Marx and Engels saw Russia as:
 - a. a backward country with no future.
 - b. a land of great spiritual values.
 - c. likely to have a socialist revolution in the near future.
 - d. likely to have a bourgeois revolution like the French revolution soon.
2. The socialist movement after 1890 established May Day as a day for workers to:
 - a. take off and enjoy themselves
 - b. prepare for socialist revolution
 - c. show their power and unity thru demonstrations and demands
 - d. demand tax cuts
3. Along with revolutionary Cuba led by Fidel Castro and the Popular Unity government of Chile led by Salvador Allende, the only other Marxist-oriented government in the Western Hemisphere has been:
 - a. the PRI government of Lazaro Cardenas in Mexico.
 - b. the New Jewel Movement government of Maurice Bishop in Grenada.
 - c. the Peoples Progressive Party government of Cheddi Jagan in Guyana.
 - d. the Guatemalan government of General Jacobo Arbenz.
4. Although many say that the specific policies of Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse-tung and other revolutionary leaders violated Marxist theory:
 - a. Marx would definitely have opposed their policies
 - b. Marx had no blueprint for the construction of socialism, but general principles adaptable to specific historical circumstances for trial and error
 - c. Marx would have definitely supported these policies
 - d. Marx would look to the continuation of theory in a post-modern world as socialism's future
5. Marxist-Leninists distinguished themselves after 1917 by:
 - a. their commitment to building parties based on Lenin's concept of a revolutionary vanguard party as articulated in Lenin's What is to be Done.
 - b. their acceptance of Lenin's theory of imperialism as articulated in Lenin's Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism and commitment to anti-imperialist organization.
 - c. their commitment to establishing a revolutionary socialist state based on concepts developed in Lenin's State and Revolution.
 - d. all of the above.

so successful at "minding everybody's business," and incorporating it into public policy, that most of our public institutions and Citizens are playing along without questioning their authority. We the People are playing the game, and we're not even aware of the rules or the object of the game. Our federal, State and local governments, employers, schools, churches, temples, even our families have become, often unwittingly, the willing agents, operatives and proponents of the sovereign Power structure. We the People have become our own worst enemy.

Any organized Power structure must perpetually conceal the fact that any Power structure exists. The basis for discrediting all "conspiracy theories" is the persistent attempts (often unsuccessful) of sovereign Power structures to keep their activities hidden. Power structures construct smokescreens to cover up their own actions, often by denying, discrediting or attacking their accusers. Power structures control the mass media through public relations and propaganda "news" which deliberately hides the real picture.

Why do all "reputable" scholars, columnists, elected officials, and media commentators reject the well-established scientific principles of cause and effect? When any two people "breathe together" and plan to do something, they are in fact conspiring to set into motion a series of events. Common sense, if we had any left, would dictate that real people make real decisions (often for their own self-interest) that have implications for all of us. Power, money and privilege congeals behind closed doors, veiled in secrecy.

Who are the international members of this presumed benevolent club of self-perpetuating co-conspirators? For sure, there are football fields of documentation to substantiate the "conspiracy theories" that the power structure has been planning what is in fact occurring for hundreds of years, from generation to generation. As you know, the first job of any conspiracy is to convince everyone that no conspiracy exists. Yet, this sovereign Power structure has a lineage of players going back hundreds of years is undeniable. Actually, I am not as interested in the "Who's Who" of this Power structure, as I am in the "What's So?" Getting beyond the institutionalized denial which surrounds "conspiracy theories" is our greatest challenge. Many people stop thinking for themselves the second they hear the term "conspiracy theory," or any of the other popular media buzzwords (e.g. white supremacist, racist, bigot, domestic terrorist). The conversation is over! Many people are willing to prostitute the truth for their own self-interest, self-preservation, and their careers. Many people have put social status above intellectual honesty. Let the facts speak for themselves, for those with the courage to listen. Do your own research, confirm the evidence, think for yourself, and draw your own conclusions.

Conspiracy theories, which are mostly based on fact, history and the public record with a little extrapolation to fill the holes, go back thousands of years. Johnny Liberty stated that if you want to trace the Power structure to its roots, he recommends *Pandora's Box* by Alex Christopher. However, the best single reference work on the Bavarian Illuminati in fact and legend is *The Illuminoids*, by Neal Wilgus.

How to Score Yourself: 0-3 correct answer: Re-read Allende's Chile, by Ed Boettcher. 4-5 correct answer: *What is to be Done*, by V.I. Lenin, and *May Day*, by Philip S. Foner. 6-7 correct answer: *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, by V.I. Lenin. 8-9 correct answer: *What is to be Done*, by V.I. Lenin. 10 correct answer: *What is to be Done*, by V.I. Lenin.

to ask, and demand a truthful answer from our elected representatives and public servants. They have pulled the wool over our eyes far too long. Don't expect them to tell the truth, unless they know that you know what they're up to. Don't fell to recall that FDR said: "Nothing in politics happens by accident."

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So, is there an invisible, sovereign power that demands allegiance from the bankrupt nation states of the United Nations? Is there a conspiracy? After considerable research and years of soul searching, I would conclude without a doubt that sovereign powers are behind the scenes of every war and conflict in the world today. These powerful individuals, trusts, institutions, businesses, corporations, banks, and networks of international organizations are the "sovereigns" behind all the governments of all the nation states in the world today.

Power structures have been with us since the illusion of time. Power structures began with the big, strong, imposing individual who protected the tribe, and evolved to the complex, transnational mega-structures that typify the modern, technological Power structures of today. The most important founding principle of any organized Power structure is "divide to conquer, and to keep conquered, keep divided".

We the People have become such experts at dividing ourselves against each other; rich against poor, so-called black against so-called white, male against female, strong against weak, smart against stupid, young against old, heterosexual against homosexual (vice versa and *ad nauseum*), that we presently pose no threat to the authority of the Power structures that run our political, economic and legal systems. We the People have become "petty tyrants" of our own accord, lording over our tiny territory of family, friends and associates.

A people divided against themselves will not organize politically, nor will they build the necessary communities of trust and open their eyes to what is really going on behind the scenes of our day-to-day struggle to survive. We the People are the political prisoners of fear, angrily blaming and suing each other, avoiding individual responsibility and persecuting the innocent instead of rallying together and recognizing our real oppressors. There is nothing to fear, except fear itself. We the People do not know who our real enemies are.

Another important aspect of any organized Power structure is "specialization." The sovereign power instructs all operatives, agents, elected officials, bureaucrats, academics and professionals within the realm of the Power structure to "mind their own business," and not meddle in the affairs of the sovereign. Only the sovereign minds everybody's business (which is power and control over the realm). The people thus divided through specialization have no idea what each other is doing, and cannot construct a meaningful picture of reality. The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.

If the people cannot see the whole picture, they cannot possibly pose a threat to the authority of the Power structure. The sovereigns have become

America: Unfit to 'change the world'

Re-print (This commentary was written by the publishers of www.Blackcommentator.com.
Glen Ford and Peter Gamble.)

"They wanted to humiliate us. It was disgusting. They covered our heads with plastic bags and hit our backs with sharp objects, which added to our wounds. They then took off all our clothes, made us stand next to the wall and carried our immoral acts that I cannot even talk about. Women soldiers took pictures of naked men and did not care."

—Iraqi former prisoner Hashim Muhsen, speaking to the *Al Jazeera* news agency

Military Police Private Lynndie England wears the obscenely grinning face that America now presents to the world. In a profound sense, it is Pvt. England and her comrades who most authentically represent the raw White racism that is the great enabler of the current American imperial abomination. Centuries of U.S. history prepared Private England to instantly assume the role of depraved dominatrix at the slave punishment facility called Abu Ghraib prison.

"He's getting hard," shouted the 21-year-old Army reservist from West Virginia, gleefully pointing to the crotch of the naked, hooded prisoner, one of seven selected for a night of Ku Klux Klan-style fun and games. Pvt. England and her six confederates, including another young female, piled the naked men in a pyramid to simulate a homosexual orgy. She placed her hand on a prisoner's buttocks, grinning like a cheerleader as the camera captured an ancient truth: Would-be slave masters are the most debased people on Earth.

In the Abu Ghraib pictures, we see U.S. soldiers performing a slave master's ritual, a specific, American kind of grotesquerie. Thoroughly ordinary young men and women pretend to be gods, lording over darker humanity. U.S. culture empowers them to act out their most hideous fantasies at the expense of "lesser" peoples.

None of the Abu Ghraib prison guards involved in the assaults appear to believe they were doing anything morally repugnant.

Rather, they whine that they should have gotten better training, or claim to have been misused by intelligence agents. Their President is whining, too.

"This is not America," said George Bush, pleading the national case to the Arab world. "America is a country of justice and law and freedom and treating people with respect."

No, America is a country built on genocide, slavery and insatiable land-piracy. This is the cultural well from which springs America's ceaseless domestic and international wars, the fountainhead of aggression as a national trait.

It is also the national characteristic that renders Americans unfit to "change the world"—Pres. Bush's favorite refrain. The same racism that encourages Americans to believe they have a right to dominate the planet prevents them from perceiving non-Whites as human beings—and brings out the dominatrix in Pvt. England.

As Freedom Rider columnist Margaret Kimberley put it in the current issue of *BlackCommentator.com*: "The abuse of Iraqi prisoners was inevitable. The plan to invade Iraq presupposed that its people are inferior and unworthy of thought or consideration... They hate us because after we kill and destroy, we ask stupid questions as if we were innocent."

The stupid, destructive President of the United States cannot help but hector Iraqis, even as he attempts to make amends for the "abhorrent abuses" against helpless prisoners. "They [Iraqis] must also understand that what took place in that prison does not represent the America that I know," said Pres. Bush. In fact, it is the Bush "base" of the electorate that are the most virulent, war-worshipping racists. Bush's America rejects information that does not conform to its core myths of American goodness and U.S. Manifest Destiny.

Now, the Americans have been knocked senseless by the photographic boomerang from Abu Ghraib, revealing the psychosexual aspect of the occupation. U.S. intelligence and psychological warfare techniques are designed to assault the target's sense of cultural and sexual self, thus "breaking" him. Since the U.S. war in Iraq is in practice a race war, the military's mission inevitably becomes the total subjugation of

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one people by the other: the breaking of a nation. Iraqis correctly perceive that Americans intend to defile their nationality and, for the men, their manhood. This aspect of the rape of Iraq is felt even more strongly than the economic pillaging of the country, because it assaults all Iraqi regions, ethnicities and classes.

For example, during the April siege of Fallujah, U.S. Marines blared rock music at resisting neighborhoods, belittling the fighters' manhood, daring them to come out to be shot in the open, and featuring derisive, canned laughter at Iraqi "cowardice." By all accounts, the audio bombardment only stiffened Iraqi resolve, and served as a perfect alien cultural backdrop to cement the various Iraqi political and religious factions that had made a stand in Fallujah.

The Abu Ghraib scandal is yet another psych-out gone awry—a direct result of U.S. intelligence agencies' attempts to bring Iraq's prisons into the international American Gulag, the legal no-man's-land centered in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The spooks and civilian interrogators encroached relentlessly on the space and authority of the prison's warden, Army Gen. Janis Karpinski, which is the basis of her claim to not be culpable for the actions of her soldiers.

Three generals in succession were sent to investigate the growing list of outrages conduct at Abu Ghraib. The first investigation was conducted by Provost Marshal Donald Ryder, the Army's chief law-enforcement officer; the second, by Major General Geoffrey Miller, then commander at Guantanamo. At revealed by the third investigator, Major Gen. Antonio M. Taguba, it was Guantanamo commander Miller who set the stage for the current debacle.

The recommendations of MG Miller's team, that the "guard force" be actively engaged in setting the conditions for successful exploitation of the internees, would appear to be in conflict with the recommendations of MG Ryder's Team and AR 190-8 that military police "do not participate in military intelligence supervised interrogation sessions."

Thus, it was Gen. Miller's bid to extend the Guantanamo law-free zone into all of Iraq—a nation that Pres. Bush claims to have rescued for democracy and the rule of law—that created the conditions in which Pvt. England and her fellow soldiers reverted to the barbaric behavior of slave masters, "softening up" Iraqi prisoners for later interrogation of professional people-breakers.

Gen. Miller's reward was to be named commander of all Iraqi prisons in April. In light of his promotion, Condoleezza Rice's recent remarks count for less than a grain of Iraqi sand:

"Those pictures were awful because American men and women in uniform, active and reserve, are serving in Iraq at great sacrifice. People are losing their lives. We came there to help to liberate the people of Iraq. We came there to build schools, and to build clinics, and we want very much that the images of Americans should be the images of helping the Iraqi people. It's simply unacceptable that anyone would engage in the abuse of Iraqi prisoners. And we will get to the bottom of it. And those who are responsible will be punished."

Normally, atrocities against Arabs would not represent a domestic problem for the White House. The American electorate was largely unmoved by the collective punishment of Fallujah, where hundreds of Iraqi noncombatants were slaughtered to avenge the killing of four armed American mercenaries. Potential Bush voters care nothing for the fate of male Iraqi prisoners, but they are gravely concerned about how the war might affect young American soldiers.

However, Iraqis, not Americans, will decide the fate of Bush's imperial expedition. Polls conducted just before the Abu Ghraib story broke "found that 60 percent of Iraqis now want U.S. troops to go home immediately, even though they acknowledge that their departure might bring further instability," according to *Time* magazine. The Iraqi general public has since become aware of the shame that untold numbers of men have borne in silence—the "immoral acts that I cannot even talk about," as former prisoner Hashim Muhain put it. Revulsion will lead to convulsions, further hastening U.S. departure from Iraq.

Private England is reported to be back in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and pregnant. Her smiling, bottomless corruption has surely helped give birth to a mighty rage.



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Power Is The Result of Force So Why Do We Not Believe The Conspiracy Theories Behind the Enslavement of The America People?

By: Cheikh El-Malik Amun Ra' Iuemhetep Beyah®

Historically, when we think about the power structures, we know those whom have held the power, makes the rules. Let us take another lesson from Johnny Liberty. Thomas Paine once said: "The strength and power of despotism consists wholly in the fear of resistance."

When talking about sovereignty, economic and legal systems and how they actually work, the nature of power, who is in control and really pulling the strings of the American political and economic system is for most people forbidden. It is taboo! Seldom do we hear these "impolite" conversations around the coffee table. These questions are not seriously addressed or investigated by the mainstream media, or academia from any neutral non-prejudiced point of the right-left political spectrum. The dichotomies and polarities are maintained by both parties and special interest groups to prevent any serious dialogue or truth-seeking to occur.

As a result of this well-organized complicity of silence, and conspiracy of ignorance and fear, most Americans haven't a clue as to what is really going on, nor how they can relate to the rapidly changing world around them. We the People are forbidden to think or question how we are actually governed. Dissent has been profoundly squelched and discredited. If we had even the faintest notion of what is actually going on, we would rise up by tomorrow morning, and demand the immediate resignation of all [our] leaders.

Who controls 98% of the world's resources including land, real estate, natural resources, capital, media, industry, corporations and national governments? To whom are they accountable? Where did they get their power and authority? Is there a conspiracy to take over the world? How do GATT and NAFTA serve the rich and powerful international bankers and destroys third world economies? Where does your income tax money really go and what does it pay for? Why is the American military under the foreign command of the United Nations? Why did George Bush involve America in the Gulf War? Why did Ronald Reagan seal the National Archives for fifty years (so we couldn't discover who really owns and controls America)?

Why did Bill Clinton continue the policies and treaties of the Bush administration to compromise the sovereignty of the United States of America? When did the Attorney General begin operating as a foreign agent under the International Monetary Fund and expatriate its allegiance to INTERPOL? How does the bankruptcy of the federal United States affect economic growth? Who are the real "enemies" of the United States of America (domestic or foreign)? Why does the government chronically lie to its Citizens? These are just a few of a thousand questions we must dare

Every allegation against Cuba, even if true, could as well be made about other governments with which the U.S. has or has had normal diplomatic relations. Yet, the attempts to destroy the Cuban government persist.

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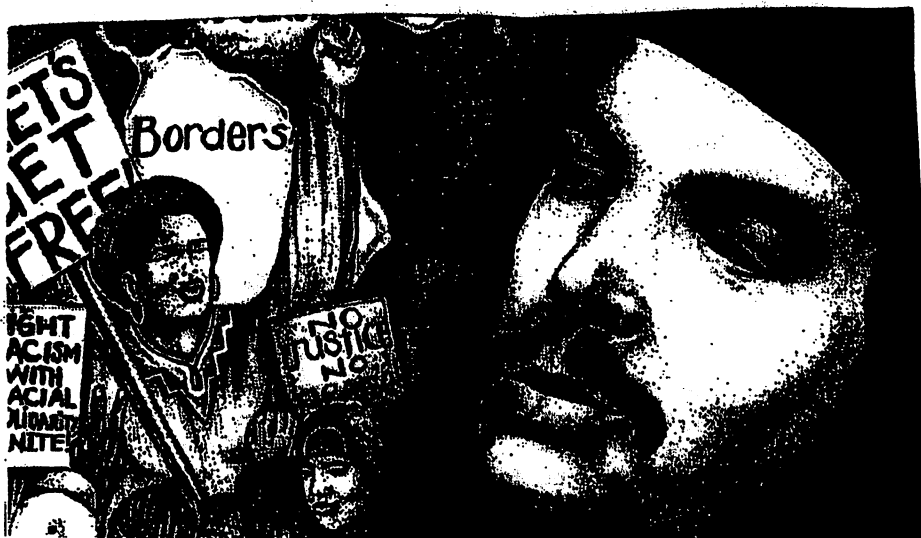
The historic hatred of the Cuban government by various U.S. presidents and their Congressional supporters has less to do with the fact that the Communist Party of Cuba is in power than another fact. A small, Western Hemispheric country, made up largely of Black and Brown people, chose to stand up to the United States, throw the Mafia out of the country, and insist that their country be treated with respect by their northern neighbor, which had for more than half a century, interfered in the internal affairs of their country. If this is not the reason, then nothing else makes sense.

As I noted, the U.S.A. had diplomatic relations with the former Soviet Union, which from the 1960s to the end of the Cold War, had thousands of nuclear missiles pointed at the U.S.A. The Cubans represent no threat to the U.S.A., and in fact, have offered assistance in fighting drug trafficking and terrorism. None of this matters to the Bush administration because, for the fanatical right-wing, the facts never stand in the way of their judgment.

The time has arrived for people of conscience in the U.S.A. to take a clear and unadulterated stand against the right-wing fanatics and their policies of international arrogance and bullying. The voices of the millions of silent opponents of international criminality must be heard. These began to be heard in the lead up to the war against Iraq and in opposition to the subsequent occupation. Those voices need to be just as loud against the policies being taken by Bush & company toward Cuba.

The time has arrived to demand: Normalize relations with Cuba now!

(Bill Fletcher Jr. is president of TransAfrica Forum and co-chair of the Anti-War Coalition, United for Peace and Justice (www.unitedforpeace.org). He can be reached at bfletcher@transafricaforum.org.)



The Psychodynamics of prison life and recidivism

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by: Jihad M. Muhammad
AR Dept. of Corrections

The penal institutions in Arkansas and, indeed, across the country, have failed in their "primary purpose" for housing those who offend in the law.

Despite politicians using "get tough on crime" platforms to win seats on the local, state and federal levels, crime continues to plague our communities.

It seems that the more money the taxpayers give toward the criminal justice system, the more money is asked for them to give. At the root of the problem is the prison industry's unwillingness to work vigorously toward prison reform that involves making the criminal a law-abiding citizen prior to his release.

As the Arkansas Dept. of Corrections struggles to balance their budget, the issue of recidivism and its causes seems to be getting little or no attention from those in the business of "corrections." The state has a need to reassess its priorities as it relates to offenders who are warehoused in penal institutions and made into worse criminals. The inhumane treatment and overall prison conditions can lead to bitterness and the loss of self-esteem. After doing any significant amount of time in prison the offender's character defects seem to grow until they literally dominate the person's personality, making it quite difficult to function in a civil manner in the society.

The system doesn't want to come to terms with the pathological problems that arise out of incarceration. Inmates are traumatized by an inhumane experience that cripples their ability to successfully recreate their lives on the outside of prison walls. They are not equipped to handle what they have gone through and, therefore, do not respond to situations properly. They are more than likely to be re-incarcerated because they continue to respond to life as if they were still incarcerated. As a result, they get punished for being the victims of crimes perpetrated against them behind prison walls.

Prison life isn't what it seems to those on the outside looking in. Inmates often leave prison with various psychological and economic dependencies created while in the system. The system doesn't promote anything like strong family values, and many inmates end up disconnected from family and friends while they're doing time. Even when inmates reconnect to loved ones on the outside, these relationships are too often short-lived, because family members fail to comprehend the lingering effects of this kind of slavery on the subconscious mind of a human being.

The life that prisoners are living and programmed to carry back to society can't be useful to combat crime. Inmates are simply programmed or mis-educated, and this is definitely not in their or society's best interests. This is why the recidivism

rate in our state is so high and constantly on the rise. Many prison administrators are not concerned with prison reform at all. They view inmates as a hopeless case that's not worth their time, except where some personal profit is to be gained. 14

Spiritual or religious leaders entering prisons regularly to counter the madness of prison life are not as effective at this task as they would like to be. Their conventional message and method of interacting with the inmate population does very little to reach the wrecked souls of these captives. Their message is often watered down and contains very little of what is needed to overcome the prison experience. Those who bring messages to rejuvenate the inmates and inspire them to develop their human potential are often slandered, vilified and eventually run off by prison administrators who don't want an inner-personal revolutionizing message preached in "their" institution.

The bottom line is inmates catch hell in prison. Prison is our hell to a considerable degree when you understand what we are subjected to on a daily basis, every moment of our incarceration.

And the society's unwillingness to forgive ex-offenders has caused many to believe that they'll run into critical obstacles on the street that will hinder them in their efforts to do the right thing. While there are doors being opened to inmates in certain sectors of society, the prevailing attitude among inmates is it's me against the world."

Inmates need to go through a therapeutic process that will allow them to resolve the negative issues they've acquired in prison, which, if left unaddressed, will lead to their re-incarceration. Without a therapeutic process to heal the wounds that have been afflicted on the offender, there is very little hope of the inmate making a successful transition back to society. Such a therapeutic system must be holistic in its nature and implementation if reforming the criminal element is to be a reality among the inmate population in Arkansas and throughout the nation.



We Should normalize relations with Cuba

by Bill Fletcher Jr.

-Guest Columnist- for The Final Call

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[Last year], On May 6, the Bush administration announced another round of serious measures aimed at destabilizing the sovereign nation of Cuba. In what can be described as being a manic approach to foreign policy, the Bush administration has now made it more difficult for Cuban Americans to send funds to their family members back home, and more difficult for them to travel to Cuba to visit relatives.

It has also created a special fund, at a point when most states could benefit from increased federal assistance, aimed at preparing the groundwork for the overthrow of the Cuban government. It has additionally kept Cuba on the list of states that allegedly sponsor terrorism, despite the fact that no evidence is cited to support such allegations.

In what almost sounds like something from a comedy skit, the Bush administration also proposes to offer funds for democracy-building aimed at reaching Afro-Cubans and addressing issues of race. This proposal comes from an administration that has not demonstrated anything other than a symbolic interest in addressing the continuing manifestations of racism in U.S. society.

Yet, the activities of the Bush administration are not a joke. Oddly, opinion polls continue to indicate that the majority of the people of the U.S.A. seek normal relations with Cuba, and an increasing number of businesses seek to take advantage of opportunities for investment in Cuba. Nevertheless, a relatively small group of Cuban exiles and right-wing fanatics united in their hatred of President Fidel Castro and the Cuban government has insisted on a policy of destabilization that has not worked, even on its own terms, not to mention representing the height hypocrisy and arrogance.

Since the Cuban Revolution succeeded in ousting the corrupt puppet Batista regime in 1959, succeeding U.S. administrations have done all that they could to undermine the Cuban government. During the 1960s, such interventions were not limited to the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, but also included a covert military operation that carried on through the mid-1960s. This accompanied economic and other efforts to isolate the Cuban government.

None of this worked.

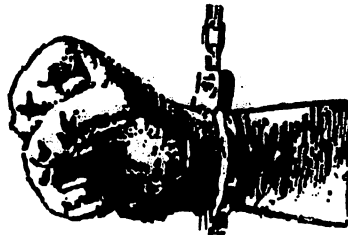
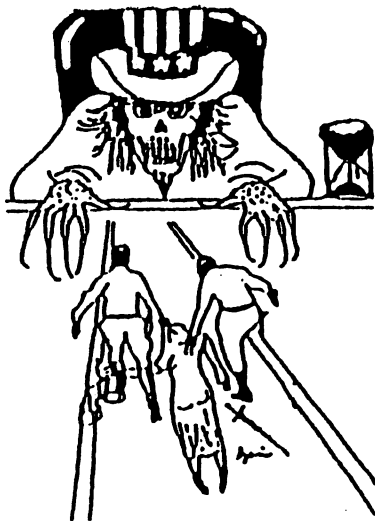
People in the U.S.A. often Stop and ask, what is the logic in the hatred by U.S. administrations of the Cuban government? What is particularly odd is that the U.S. was able to establish sound diplomatic relations with the former Soviet Union, even during the height of the Cold War. Relations were opened with the People's Republic of China, beginning in the early 1970s during the Vietnam War (when the Chinese were openly supporting North Vietnam and the anti-U.S. rebels in South Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea/Cambodia). Yet, for some reason the U.S. cannot seem to change its attitude toward Cuba.

including Africans, are debriefed and warned about the timid minds of the Negros, Blacks, Colored People's. One of the most damaging symptoms of Mental Slavery is the staunch denial of one's own slave status! "Who you calling a slave? You don't know me! I'm a grown-ass man! You don't know who you be talking to! I'll kick your yes-yes"! These are the defensive words of one that do not know their true identity, origin or purpose.

Freedom is a divine and natural right to be the self in all its glory. Any time one's freedom is taken he will instinctively (in the words of John Quincy Adams during the 1841 Supreme Court's Amistad Decision), "break loose his chains. He will decimate his enemies. He will try and try against all adversity to get home". Tragically, the U.S. Government's Inspected and Approved Slave Labels of Negro's, Blacks, Colored People, sustains the keeping freed slaves both

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domiciled and complacent. Or it's those, still in darkness, making vain attempts to become the Certified Negro American Citizens, (Republican or Democrat), in the state wherein they reside until they no longer know they are still slaves. Yet, it is they who are proudly displaying the Slave Names. There is also feigned and assumed citizenship in the usage of slave names. While it may come as a shock to most Black African Americans to discover they are not true citizens of the USA, or any other free national government on Earth, there's lots more hidden mess in a Slave Name. Another deficit in slave names is attainment. *There is no attainment in slave names except issues towards the state of slavery.* No slave is ever free to be himself or herself. Slave names do not relate to the status's of freedom. These names only identify slaves and their conditions. That is what is in a slave name.



WHAT IS MEANT BY KEEPING IT REAL?

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by: Lenard Bradford-Bey®

Most young prisoners, but certainly, prisoners in general, when entering prison for the first and sometimes the second time, regardless of race, they group together out of a sensing—a longing—almost a need of belonging, for family. Sometimes, though today, older prisoners will try to reach these younger prisoners to pass on political education or provide some sense of religious guidance's. Unfortunately the Michigan Department of Corrections considers all groups in prison to be a gang except if the group is a Christian based group; with the only exception being the Christian group is all Caucasians and considered Skin Heads, Nazi's, etc. Otherwise, all groups are systematically classified a gang.

Ironically, I have been incarcerated for 34 years and the Michigan Penal System has never had a gang problem, although the MDOC feeds the public and media this false propaganda for the sole purpose of receiving federally funded monies under the Terrorist Act classified as Security Threat Group (STG) prisoners. This allows the MDOC to justify level V prisons which receive this additional funding, and allows for prisoners to be warehoused in Northern Michigan to help the rural area economy.

Northern Michigan has always felt its residence to be different, better than, and separate from lower Michigan residents, but enjoy the use of prisoners from lower Michigan to help stabilize its economy. Aside from the Northern Michigan University program, this part of the state is probably 90% Anglo in current population. Yet, its prison system is 85% African and 4% Hispanic and 1% Asia. How can this be?

Prisoners in Northern Michigan do not live the same as prisoners in lower Michigan. This is mainly due to prisoners in maximum security are confined to their cells 22½ hours a day, except for the prisoners experiencing the special designation of being classified STG, whom receive by policy 1-hour out of cell movement a-day. Prisoners cannot decide what or when to eat, when to exercise or shower. They can't turn the power in their cells off or on when they want to as it is controlled by staff; nor can they regulate the temperature in their cells, or have any control over when they receive visits or how long they last. Northern Michigan is almost 400 miles from the inner cities of lower Michigan where most of the prisoners come from. STG II prisoners family members are expected to travel 400+ miles to talk to the prisoner for 1-hour over a telephone separating all physical contact behind a thick glass. A 1-hour visit after almost 14-hours traveling. That's insane, yet, that's the MDOC's prison system.

I think it has to be almost impossible to grow into a mature, responsible adult when a human is infantilized in this way. Prisoners need a bridge to the outside world, people in their life giving passage to their voice. People that can and will help to balance the emotion of love and hate. Otherwise, as presently existing, the MDOC is creating hate filled young men that will eventually return to society as hate filled grown men. The vision I have of such a created being is frightening even for myself as a prisoner. I'm certain society is not ready for such monsters to be released upon them; and eventually, rather sooner or later, they shall be released.

Prisoners are humans whom have made mistakes, bad and in some cases, very serious mistakes. But not one of you reading this is without mistake, or that doesn't have someone you love or in your family that has made mistakes. Prisoners know this, and under the cover of darkness, in the silence of night when that prisoner is lonely, their own tears become a reality of their wrongdoing. Their harm to others, their family and their self.

Many of us, could reach each other on a level that could be the beginning of turning around our thinking process. However, where the MDOC has failed to do this, and a prisoner is successful, that prisoner then becomes a threat or danger in the minds of prison officials and the object of attack as being a gang leader. Why would the MDOC want to destroy anyone that can help to alter the criminal mind set and save the state millions of dollars?

The answer is because the MDOC maintain its personal illusion of power through disruption and chaos. This is why the system is in perpetual change—keep everybody unbalanced from the top of the system down for control.

It doesn't matter that we teach each other where possible that in understanding such a system that things are here today and gone tomorrow, so that no matter how bad something is, it won't last long. We have to learn to adjust to the good and the bad and accept them both as life's experiences.

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Prisoners in particular, but people in general, we have to learn more about the things we don't want to do or become. Such as a prisoner cussing out other prisoners or guards, arguing for two and three hours about whether or not the food was cold or not cooked right. It's only one meal, and I don't want to become angry about things like that. If one wants to make an issue out of it, then write it up and move on.

People in general are upset, hurt and want revenge to the point of becoming the very evil they perceive someone to be and none of that evil corrects, changes, or better the thing that caused the anger. Every effort we make to love means we don't have to feel hatred. When we are compassionate, all our energy goes in a positive direction, and there's no room for negativity. Then, just maybe we can begin to deal with the cause of the problem which is often found in the way we think, or the object of our anger, how they were thinking.

Who are we to demand a life for a life? I'm more concerned with helping another human to not take another life, than I am with taking their life. After all, to take their life I'm no different from them; we both are then sick. Because what we don't realize is that our actions give rise to our future experiences no matter how right or wrong we think we are. So it's better to stay on the side of love and compassion in all situations, and justice will prevail. Do you have the wisdom of Solomon? And even he fell short in the end.

Prisoners need to be accountable and take full responsibility for their actions and choices in life. You may feel that your circumstances are hopeless and serve no purpose. But difficulties are not caused by others, they are the result of your own previous thoughts and actions. Your thoughts, whether good or bad, just come and go—they're only firings of your brain—whereas the essence of mind is open, present, aware.

As I near conclusion, let me share this, as it was shared with me about a northern sparrow named "Young Black" who hated to fly south for the winter: ".....Young Black hated the thought of leaving his nest home so much that he put off his journey until the last possible moment. After saying good-bye to all his friends flying south, he stayed in his nest five months against the laws of nature. Then the weather turned bitter cold and he couldn't delay his flight any longer. So Young Black started to fly south. Soon it began to snow, and ice formed on his little wings. Almost dead from cold and exhaustion, he fell to the ground and landed in a barnyard — we'll just call this barnyard MICHIGAN PRISONS.

Now, as the young sparrow was breathing what he thought might be his final breath, a brown horse walked out of the barn and moved his bowels, covering Young Black with hot, steaming fertilizer. At first, Young Black got extremely upset, twitting, "You Ass! What in the hell are you doing?" This was surely a hot and shitty way to die.

But after a while, the hot fertilizer warmed his frozen feathers, and life returned to his body. To his surprise, he discovered he could breathe. Young Black began to chirp so loud that his song could be heard for miles around the yard.

Then, slowly, a big white cat named Bobcat came creeping toward the little singing jailbird. Ol' Bobcat dug into the pile of fertilizer and found where the singing was coming from. It took him a while, but in the end he caught Young Black and ate him."

The lesson to this is that, first, not everybody who shits on you is your enemy. Second, not everybody who takes shit off you is your friend. And finally, if you ever get warm and comfortable out there, even if it's in a pile of shit, you keep your mouth shut! And that's keeping it real.

debts (the old gal kept over 400 of her own Negroes). Some Black slaves were able to buy their freedom while others escaped from the Southern plantations into the northern "Free States" and Canada. Still to an untrained eye these slaves/ex-slaves appeared to be free, right? Wrong! There's that brand name "Negro", again!

The point here is this, a free Negro, who still thinks in his mind he is a Negro, is still a slave. Then again, look at the graphics ... adjectives, verbs and prefixes may vary the descriptions but cannot change the nature or the status of a subject. For example: there can be Old Negroes, Field Negroes, Poke-A-Dot Negroes and / or Freed Negroes!!! The fact of the status is, 'A Negro by any other name is still a Negro'. This is the ugly fruition of the slave names. No matter how or when the liberation of the so-called Negro was acquired albeit between the sophisticated Underground Railroad to the surreptitious Reconstruction Amendments, the slave names of the Negro, Black, Colored Person actually sustains and perpetuates their bondage. Truth be told, there are no legal or psychological distinctions between Negro, Black, Colored slave and a free Negro, Black, Colored. Either status bears the mark of a domesticated African National who is now the fruit of the Federal Criminal Act called "Denationalization". The word Free simply does not change the status or the meaning of the names Negro, Black, Colored, from deluding to slavery. All convening of the Reconstruction Congresses, (1865-1868-1870) were made of Free White (mostly Masonic) Males, who were very

conscious of the mental enslavement of the Negro population. After all, it was their Free Masonic Forefathers who could not establish the United States of America without its slaves. And this prosperity was passed on, as a national legacy, assuring supremacy to European descendants. In parallel to the human slave names, there is no great concern to the owner of a domesticated Wolf, whether it jumps the fence or is unleashed. As long as the Wolf thinks it is a dog, eats dog chow and answers to "Spot", "Lassie" or "Hear Boy", it is a DOG! The Wolf remains domicile and a pet because it has been bred contrary to its nature.

Yet, for some _____ (you-fill-in-the-blank) reason, the Black African Americans of today, as were the Negro, Black, Colored of yesterday, it is *they* who are the main carriers and transmitters of the Mental-Slave Disease. Noble Drew Ali informed the Moors "I have traveled the south and have examined the conditions there and it is the work of my people continuously practicing the thing which bring dishonor, disgrace and disrespect to any nation that lives the life." The contaminating powers of this disease are self-perpetuating through the changing Slave Names every decade! What else can any person who insist on not only calling him or her self a slave but will not answer to any other name except those deluding to slavery? A crazy as it may sound, the most dangerous slaves are the ones who do not know they are slaves. Indeed they will fight to the death and/or kill anyone in defense of their wretched condition. Most foreigners visiting the States from afar,

not matter very much what the individuals call themselves e.g. Butch-6X, Moisha, Mohammed, Brahman or a John Smith. Actually, as much as one may not like the name John Smith, or the horse Ole' Massa John Smith rode in on, the truth is... "Mr. John Smith" was a Free Man and John Smith is his free name!!! Just because he gave his name to his chattel, (for identification purposes only), do not make "John Smith" a slave name. Quite the contrary, in reality it is the slave (property) with the Freed Man's names not a pseudo free person with a slave name.

This brings to surface, "What is a slave name and what's in it?" The Honorable Noble Drew Ali is the first descendant of former slaves to free himself from the Constitutional vices of the United States. As a true Free Man Ali instructed the Moors, "Negro, Black, Colored and Ethiopian; *these names were given to slaves by Slave holders during the time of slavery*". Most people in the United States today have no idea The Names Negro, Black, and Colored ARE *still* slave names!!! It's just a damn shame! The *definition, history and purpose* of these slave names, although remaining the same, has somehow become accepted as normal! So much so until they are assumed to qualify a Negroid (Slave) as 1st class U.S. Citizens. The shame is in a Government's principles to debase the vital Mothers and Fathers of the entire Human Family.

Corrected U.S. history will reveal the 1865 Thirteenth Amendment did in fact abolish the institution of slavery in the United States. Yet it had little or no effect

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upon the manumission of the descendants of Africa. This is because the United States Congress was only empowered to abolish the institution of Slavery that had been held lawful in the U.S. Constitution. It did not have the power to free those, which it had enslaved! Only a few historians take an in-depth look into the selfish and sinful powers ratified in the Fourteenth Amendment. They are the minority to see it as a True Title and constitutional Deed of Assumable Ownership to the ex-slaves. This document reclaimed jurisdiction of "All Persons Born or Naturalized" in only their third year of emancipation.

In order to look into the slave names let us look first at the slave. A slave is a man (or woman) deprived of their natural state of freedom by another man. The name "Slave" denotes deprivation of liberation is in full effect. The slave "name" is then applied to show exact ownership of the slave. Hence, after Africans were deprived of Africa and owned by the U.S., they were marked as Negroes, Colored Folks And Black People, and "three-fifths" of a person. While this may sound like "Old Hat", there is another side to this picture. It is the answer to the often-asked question. "Why, after 135+ years, the Negro is still not free?" The late Martin Luther King, Jr., also asked this question. *The answer is in the name.* The slave name "Negro". There have been numerous cases of freed Negroes in the U.S. prior to the 1865 congressional Manumission e.g. Prince Hall, Dred Scott and Harriet Tubman to name a few. In fact, Martha Washington, Old George's Widow, freed 123 of his slaves to satisfy his final Will and

17 WHEN ITS TOO LATE

By: Rashid

When will it become clear that lip-service liberation is a failed tactic; counterrevolutionary?

When will you realize that spontaneous combustion (riots) are minor, meaningless affairs, which produce at best only temporary concessions, physical injury, capture, and increased repression?

When will you see the inherent contradiction in mere verbal protest against your being brutalized by the pigs when and because you verbally protest?

When will you realize that the natural environment cannot sustain us indefinitely, that its resources are rapidly depleting under the ravenous demands that the profit-oriented industries are placing upon it?

When will you acknowledge that you are instrumental and complicit in deadly global pandemics raging uncontrolled and untreated, and in the mass starvation and dehydration of fellow humans, and in militarist mass murderings and terrorism of innocent populations, and that you fund and serve the institutions which permit and even create these foul conditions?

When will you perceive that, as Adam Smith forewarned, capitalist division of labor has caused you and the labor force in general to become "as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to be"?

When will it hit home that your "privileged" American Standard of living is being steadily reduced to Third World conditions by your politico-economic leaders? and that via draconian taxes, your income is used to increasingly subsidize private industry to the exclusive profit of corporate bosses, while your social benefits are being continuously trashed? Consider economic recovery without the necessary job growth (an economic miracle?)

When will you take into account that the social and cultural fabric of this society is bankrupt; that you have no meaningful values to pass on to your own children? Query: do you even know your own children?

When will the principle take hold that property and profit motives should not have greater value than human life and relations?

When will it strike you that herd animals that do not cooperatively resist a predator will be perpetually preyed upon and eventually rendered extinct?

When will you so-called "radical dissidents", who decry the strategy of turn-the-other-cheek Pacifists, raise your own cheeks from the comfortable and protective confines of your armchair?

When will you discern that concentration camps are an effective deterrent to direct action, because you lack the resolve to physically tear down their walls from without; leaving those you claim to love and honor to rot in cages?

When will it become apparent that the enemy is without morals or compassion and thus must be overthrown by determined physical resistance; trial by combat? Think: scientific Socialist guerrilla warfare.

When will you intellectual dissectors of ideology comprehend that the enemy of your foe is your own tactical ally? and that while you argue dogma and party lines, million are dying, suffering, and being mutilated needlessly by our mutual enemy? Are you opportunists, Pacifists, or cowards?

I expect these realizations will take hold when you find yourself at that point, where we from the marginal and poor classes already are, of total desperation; a point from which you will be compelled to try and resist for the sake of immediate survival, with your back to the wall. But by then there may be nothing left to preserve but bones and dust.

OPEN LETTER FROM

Muhammad, #117440
Sterling Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 6000
Sterling, Colorado 80751

29 July, '05
~ 0830 hrs.

Bradford-Bey,

Your letter was an unexpected yet much welcome delight. It's best I write now for I anticipate my return to the hole shortly! Once again I've "accidentally" on purpose thrown sand in the gears of my open, and avowed, enemy. Out here there's an independent organization (A.C.A.) that goes to D.O.C. concentration camps and do a review of facility, operations and staff. Yesterday, during lunch, I got their attention in the chow hall. A guard physically tried to prevent one of the two Rep's from approaching and speaking w/me. When they got to the table the first thing I said was "this is the most racist facility in d.o.c." That set the tone for the next 10 mins. of intense dialogue that sent the guards scattering like cockroaches, when the lights come on, and the man sitting at the table w/me was so stunned (to put it mildly) by what I was saying to the Rep's he got up and left the chow hall (did someone yell fire in a crowded theater?). The Rep's were immediately ushered out of the chow hall (Tour Over!) and into the admin. Offices for spin control. I've already been written up (not surprised). Obviously, they can't write me up for telling the truth; but, I can and have been written up on the basis of lie. I haven't seen the write up yet and don't need to. I'm so use to D.O.C. throwing shit at me that I always carry tissue in my pockets. I sent a letter off to an Atty. in the legal mail: Basically, I told her what I did and to be on notice that I may "slip in the shower"; "trip (oh clumsy me!) and fall down the stairs"; become suicidal; "endanger a staff member so as to require persuasive measures to get the situation (meaning me!) under control." Shit happens!

I sit in this necropolis where everyone has religion, yet no one knows GOD. Every man has vision yet all are blind. People use the bullshit to fertilize their dreams and continually surprised that nothing ever grows.

Today is an international holiday, "Undermine Your Enemy Day." In the Spirit of this day (which is every day) I'm going out to celebrate! What about you?

Stay up. Stay Strong. Stay focused.

In Verity and Respect,

Muhammad

P.S. Please see fit to Print / Publish this letter in "Off The Hook" and The Michigan Flash Point News. Thank you!

Free's Defense Network (Eugene, OR)
Missouri Prisoner Labor Union (St. Louis, MO)
Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (Lawrence, KS)
Partisan Defense Committee (New York)
Prisoners of Conscience Committee (Chicago)
South Chicago ABC Zine Distro (Homewood, IL)
Twitch Entropy ABC Legal Services (Austin, TX)
Voices in the Wilderness (Chicago)
Maoist International Movement (Los Angeles)

*Indicates that I do not have current mailing address.

What IS in a Slave Name?

by: Dr. Elihu N. Pleasant-Bey
Memphis, Tennessee



The talk of slavery is strictly taboo in America today. Neither self-proclaimed "Whites" nor so-called "Blacks" want to discuss slavery and *dialog is completely out of the window*. It is very difficult to understand why the greatest of American Past Times, The African Slave Trade, is so hush-hush. Could it be because there are Sixty Million Slaves, under judicially licensed names, still alive and well in the United States??? Hummm, maybe it is not in the best interest for Americans to know *some slaves do not know they are slaves!* The biggest problem about *Slave Names* in America today is, only a few people actually know the difference between slave names and *Free National Names*. For years there have been certain circles of descendant ex-slaves teaching other ex-slaves about what *slave names* are. The question should be this: What is there about *Freedom* can one slave teach another slave? Especially when freedom is something

neither one can remember ever having, much less being!

John Hawkins or Sue Smith or Robert Love or Charles McDonald, Cora Bell, etc., etc. These are not Slave Names! Neither are the millions of other Christian "Sir Names", which have been given to the children of Africa by their western rulers. Some people have gone so far as to either replace their Last Names with an "X" or legally changed to an African or Arabic Name. Others, under the Afro-Centric or self-conscious levels, do similar acts of rebellion against the status quo. Needful to say anything about true freedom taught by one ex-slave to another ex-slave is suspect and in want of immutability. No matter how sincere the intent maybe, when the blind leads the blind, it leaves the destination in question. The problem is little or no attention is given to the National-Base Name of the ex-slaves. Until this matter is surfaced and resolved, it does

In the meantime, I propose the following process for those who are interested. I will provide a topic and invite everyone to submit written responses. I propose the first topic to be "Targets of Repression." I purposely leave it ambiguous so you may choose, for example, to discuss why you are a target of repression; you may give a history of a specific people targeted for repression; you may point out the process by which the government chooses its targets of repression. In fact, I hope for a diversity of insights that will create a rich fabric of dialogue.

I don't want to set artificial deadlines or page limits, but it would be good to have submissions for "Targets of Repression" by the end of September. Once I put the topic together, I will send the final product to each of you, along with another proposed topic. I will not in any way submit the final product for any kind of publication or consideration until everyone who submitted to it approves of it.

For those who are artists, feel free to submit artwork and illustration relevant to the topics.

Also, please suggest topics you feel are relevant so I can disseminate them and incorporate those ideas into the work.

If there are mail regulations that inhibit this process, please let me know what we must do to accommodate those regulations.

I list below the people and organizations receiving a copy of this letter. If you know of anyone who should be included, please feel free to pass on this letter to them or send me their address. If you know the contact information for those below (*) for whom I do not have contact information, any help you could provide me would be appreciated.

Once I begin putting submissions together for "Targets of Repression," I will propose a second topic. Whether or not you are interested, and I hope all of you are, please let me know you received this letter when you get the time to respond. Mail service is sometimes unreliable.

I hope to hear from all of you. Stay dangerous.

Real Freedom,

Mumia Abu-Jamal
Sundiata Acoli*
Michael Davis Africa
Edward Goodman Africa
Janet Holloway Africa
Delbert Orr Africa
Janine Phillips Africa
William Phillips Africa
Debbie Sims Africa
Charles Sims Africa
Sherman Austin*
Zolo Agona Azania
Marilyn Buck*
Yero Cummings*
David Gilbert*
RG Hall, Jr.*
Jamal Hart
Rashid Johnson
Khalfani X. Khaldun
Jaan K. Leaman
W.M.E. we Langa
Raymond Luc LeVasseur*
Rob Los Ricos*
Jerry Dale Lowe
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Joseph Mattingly
Sheik Mark Moore El*
Leonard Peltier*
Hugo Pinell
Ed Poindexter
Hyung-Rae
Talib Y. Rasheed*
Herman Wallace*
Jerome White-Bey*
Robert King Wilkerson*
Albert Woodfox*
Alvaro Luna Hernandez
Richard Williams
Jalil Muntaqim
Helen Woodson
Jamil Al-Amin
James E. Scoot, Jr.
Lenard Bradford-Bey
Muhammad

VOICES FROM THE IRONHOUSE



Collective Visions Of The Mind

South Chicago ABC Zine Distro
P. O. Box 721, Homewood, IL 60430

DOES CRIME EQUALS BLACK PEOPLE?

In the June 2005, issue of *ML-PPN's*, I was reading an article by Alvin Reid, The St. Louis American, entitled "Blacks moving targets for cops". The article was preceded by a cartoon which had a Black man handcuffed, and two white officers on both sides of him holding his right and left arms. One of the officers had a gun in his hand pointing it at the Black Man, while the other officer had a billy-club in his hand -- in which it appears that he was waiting to crack the Black Man in his head. The image of this cartoon and this particular article inspired me to write the following article: Does crime equals Black People?

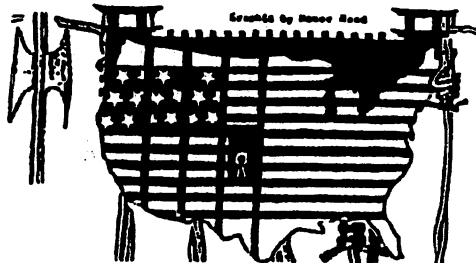
Crime does not equal black people. However, crime panics are at the heart of the politicization of the racial divide in United States. It is important to note that crime is real. It is a grim reality of life in many of the cities in United States that people do get robbed, beaten, shot, and killed, but the notion that there is a rising tide of violent crime in United States is a myth. What has been rising is not violent crimes, but the public consciousness of crime as a problem and political issue. The fear of crime is often disproportionate to the real threat it poses, and therefore, the consciousness and fear of crime has not only become exaggerated, it has also been distorted into a racial issue.

The powerful association between Black People and Crime has been created by the political intelligentsia, the media, the intellectual elite's. They have all played a key role in turning Black crime into the focus for public fears. This has been done through promoting sensationalized crime stories on television shows, through promoting law and order policies on Capitol Hill, among other things. It is these forces that have established the image of a criminal Black Urban underclass threatening civilization and the American way of life.

In the mind of the public, the problem becomes violent Black Criminals and their gun and drug culture, so the prevailing attitude of the White Elite's is that Black Criminals are the cause of society's problems. However, the real problem is not with the so-called criminal pathology of Black People, particularly, Black Men, but with the structures of our societies and the state power that presides over them on behalf of White Elite's.

In conclusion, it must be noted that the preoccupation with Black Crime is an ideological construction that serves the interests of the Political Intelligentsia, and the Dominate Elite's in several ways, first it disguises the real reasons for the conditions of brutality, and repression in the inner cities, therefore, shifting responsibility away from those in power; secondly, it helps to consolidate a base of support for the law and order authorities among White Americans. In this way the government preys on White insecurities and twists them into a racially charged fear of violent Black People, but it equals a distorted relationship between Black communities and the forces of law and order -- the powerful agents of the United States, who are branded as the "Real" aggressors against society, the "Real" threat to decent citizens, "The Barbarians" at the Gate.

By: Gee Ford (AKA, Hasani Bomani) #158819
Marquette Branch Prison
1960 US 41 South
Marquette, Mich. 49855



who was an FBI infiltrator. Fred Hampton had been murdered while he lay in bed. There was some evidence that he had been drugged. That event can fairly be described as a Gestapo-style political assassination. That incident alone completely overshadowed the entire Watergate episode in significance by a substantial margin.

The pattern is difficult to avoid. The media defend the rich and the powerful, not the poor and marginalized. The lesson of Watergate was stark and clear, the powerful are capable of defending themselves. Where the media is concerned, Watergate was yet another cynical exercise in the service of power.

Yet, we can notice the media's treatment of victims of power in foreign parts. A final example is that some say the Western media is unfair to Israel and apply a 'double standard' to it, perhaps because of anti-Semitism, perhaps because the journalists are self-hating Jews or suffer from other psychic disorders. The 'proof' of the double standard is that Israeli crimes receive more coverage than comparable or worse crimes in Syria, South Yemen and other Arab and Third World states.

The fallacy of the 'proof' is that the level of media coverage of Israel is huge compared to that of Syria or any other Middle East country. Furthermore, the reporting of Israel is completely different in character. One would have to search a long time to find a favorable word about Syria, South Yemen, etc., or any word at all. Such coverage as there is uniformly negative, generally harshly so, with no mitigating elements. The coverage of Israel is quite different.

The idea that the media systematically distort the news in the interests of the powerful is a very difficult one to accept for many people. Reject it out of hand or examine the evidence put forward ... be careful that you don't end up in front of the camera where the rich, the powerful, or the government want the public to view you in a particular light. PEACE.

Dear Lenard Bradford Bey,

July 20, 2005

"Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation... that people are already dying you could have saved, that generations more will die or live poor butchered half lives if you fail to act..."

—George Jackson

I write this form letter to all of you, challenging you to imagine the possibility, if there was a way to reach out to every class war and political prisoner in this country, all the men and women silenced by the government, and we could take the most dangerous thoughts and collect them from those most dangerous minds and compile them into one volume. Imagine all these women and men sharing their views on a wide variety of topics, from capitalism to war to the environment, from race to U.S. drug policy to police and prisons. And all these thoughts were edited down, combined together by topic, and presented in such a way that it almost seemed as if these prisoners were gathered into a single space to carry on this conversation.

I am inviting you to take part. I am offering no money, I do not yet have a publisher agreeing to publish, and I am paying for postage and copies out of pocket from my own prison cell. But I believe firmly that this may be one of the most important undertakings I could accomplish in life, and I believe the end result of this could be an important gift to the world.

If and when a publisher does agree to publish, and if any money is offered, it seems to me that the money should be put into a trust and provided to a cause all of us participating in this project can support. Maybe even begin a Political Prisoner Defense Fund.

Lastly, most people feel that the media is not critical enough of the government according to a Gallup Poll for the New York Times, and also over twenty years and today as well, even more people consider the press to be too often influenced by powerful people and organizations, especially including the federal government, big business, trade unions and the military.

Well, from those three observations, we could conclude by exploring the range of permitted opinion on important topics, establishing the boundaries of acceptable discourse in the mainstream media. Probably one of the strongest examples is a look back at the Watergate affair. The Watergate affair was and still is, seen throughout the world as a high point in investigative journalism, demonstrating the power of the independent press to challenge the political establishment, even to depose a president. I personally don't buy that for this reason ... the major scandal of Watergate, as portrayed in the mainstream press, was that the Nixon administration sent a band of petty criminals to break into the Democratic Party headquarters, for reasons that remain obscure to this date. It is interesting that there was no scandal when, 'just as passions over Watergate reached their zenith; it was revealed that the FBI had been disrupting the activities of the Socialist Workers Party, a legal political party, by illegal break-in and other measures for ten years, 'a violation of democratic principle far more extensive and serious than anything charged during the Watergate hearings'. Documents that the government was forced to release at that time under Freedom of Information legislation exposed a systematic and extensive programme of terror, disruption, intimidation and the instigation of violence, 'initiated under the so-called most liberal Democratic administrations and carried further under Nixon'. The targets of the FBI harassment and terror included the US Socialist Workers Party, the Young Socialist Alliance and the Black Panthers Party.

Nixon had a hit list, the so-called 'enemies list', which contained the names of powerful and influential people of that time. Yet, absolutely nothing happened to anybody on the enemies list. At the same time as the enemies list was uncovered, it was publicly revealed that the FBI had directed the assassination of a African political organizer, Fred Hampton. Brother Hampton, an influential member of the Black Panthers Party, had been involved in the politicization of the Black People's Nation in Chicago whom the government, through their mass media listed as a gang called the Blackstone Rangers.

The FBI had first attempted to disrupt the relationship between the Black People's Nation and the Black Panthers Party, and then turned to the destruction of the Panthers themselves. Fred Hampton was regarded as particularly dangerous because of his opposition to violent acts or rhetoric and because of his success in community organizing. In a pre-dawn raid in December 1969, the Chicago police raided the flat where Brother Hampton was staying, and fired approximately a hundred shots, killing Fred Hampton and another Panther, Mark Clark. At first the police claimed that they had responded to the fire of the Panthers, but it was quickly established by the local press that this was false. All the gunfire had been directed at the inside corners of the flat rather than towards the entrances, and it transpired later that the police had been supplied with a floorplan by the chief of Panther security and Fred Hamptons' personal bodyguard, William O'Neal,



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ATTENTION ALL PRISONERS MEDICAL NOTICE

By: Leonard Bradford-Ray

THE SILENT KILLER ATTACKS THE LIVER

Michigan Prisoners are not aware of it, but over 50% of its population is infected with HCV. HCV is the hepatitis virus (disease) that attacks your liver. Prison officials are well aware that this has become an epidemic, so why hasn't prisoners been informed of the spread of HCV, and more importantly, why hasn't prisoners been treated to stop the spread of this virus? The answer is simple, TOO SAVE THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS and the CORPORATE STATE OF MICHIGAN \$\$\$\$\$\$. After all, we are slaves to the State, so what difference does it make if letting us die will save the state some money.

After learning about how many prisoners were hepatitis carriers, I begun researching and studying all the information I could to learn as much about this as I possibly could. Here's what I uncovered:

There are several types of hepatitis. Hepatitis B is mainly caused through sexual contact. Its a disease caused by a virus that infects the liver. It can lead to severe illness, life-long disease, scarring (cirrhosis) of the liver, liver failure, liver cancer or death. Fortunately there is a vaccine for HBV.

The SIGNS are, you feel tired all the time • have mild fever • have stomach pain • have aching muscles or joints • have an upset stomach • have diarrhea • throw up a lot • have jaundice (yellowing of skin or eyes) • have dark urine • have light-colored stools • not feel hungry sounds like a common cold don't it? That's how it tricks us more times than not, we think we have a cold virus that runs its course, while all the time, our body is warning us of the HBV attacking our liver cells. The strange thing about HBV is that it comes and can disappear without us ever knowing we have been attacked by this virus. Some people live their whole life and it never attacks them again. So what is the cause of this virus? As already stated, HBV manily is caused through sexual contact, however, **TATTOOS** is another cause. That's right, tattoos. Many prisoners have gotten tattoos while in prison and thought the needles were clean. But who really knew if the other prisoner actually used a new needle, or was it that we thought it was new, mainly because the prisoner said it was new? Did we see them take it out of a sealed pack? Was it cleaned in alcohol in front of us? There are just so many unknown variables until the only safe way is to stop getting tattoos altogether. If you don't have any, don't get any.... If you have some, don't get any more.

Then, there is the blood transfusions given before (July, 1992); blood was not checked back then for diseases and since this virus can lay dormant for a life time in our bodies, it can attack at any given time. Of course there is the main-line drug user! That's right, those who inject drug into their veins. This activity usually lead to a more serious type of hepatitis.

Hepatitis C, also known as HCV. Most people who get HCV carry it for the rest of their lives. Hepatitis C causes more chronic liver disease than hepatitis B. Unlike hepatitis B, there is no vaccine for hepatitis C but recent research indicates there is medication one can take that has been know to knock out the HCV.

Its not clear whether HCV is found in semen, vaginal secretions or saliva, but, it is known that the symptoms are the same as HBV, but more like the flu or a stomach virus.

One of the more frequent mistakes made by prison doctors, but physicians in general, even in the wider society is to rely too much upon the serum liver enzyme measurement. These serum liver enzymes can be used as markers, for example, in following treatment effectiveness and disease progression, but liver biopsy remains the gold standard for judging the severity of the disease.

Unfortunately, prisoners are the bottom of the food chain to be cared for, and in Michigan Prisons they have created a policy of making a prisoner be tested 12 times (twice a year) measuring the serum liver enzyme before allowed any treatment. That's six (6) years of suffering

Is It The Media OR Medium BIG BROTHER

By: Leonard Bradford-Ray

The media is held as the common mode of expression which can and often does, include speech, facial expression, gesture, signs, pantomime, music, drama, writing, painting, sculpture, radio and television. In America or the occident, radio, newspapers and television are the primary tools to distribute information. The media is perceived as business that is independent and the main source of providing the public with the truth. It is viewed as a watch dog to neutralize governmental power and to restrain officials and politicians by exposing their wrongdoing and shortcomings. The question is, is this a true depiction of the mass media?

It seems that reporting news has come under fire more in this decade than any other time in recent history. Claims that the media reporting has brought about a weakening in the fabric of democracy by challenges government and political decision and reporting half-truths or flat out misinformation about politicians conduct. Some want the media controlled under lock and key as a free institution of business, while others say the media or press should have the freedom to report as it see fit at the risk of some mistakes and misinformation being reported.

Yet both agree that the media is independent of government and also defiant because it is a business.

Common sense tells us there's no doubt that the media has a societal purpose, the debate is what is that purpose? Malcom-X taught us in the 60s that when government and politicians want to destroy a person, they first use the media to villainize the person; to paint an image that the public would feel no connection with and hate, so that when the government murder the person, the public would think good for them, they were bad anyway. This also applies to other nations and their leaders.

Under that scheme the media is used to train the minds of the people to a virtuous attachment to their government, and to the arrangements of the social, economic, and political order more generally.

When you look at the mass media and how its ran as a business, and how the government telecommunication create and regulate it's operation, you can clearly see the societal purpose is of 'protecting privilege from the threat of public understanding and participation. In other words, the purpose of the media is to cultivate public stupidity and conformity, in order to protect the powerful from interference by the common people like you and I.

How could I say such a thing? Simple, for years academicians have taught that the media act as a propaganda machine. The common interests very largely escape public opinion altogether, and can be guided and governed only by a specialized class whose personal interest reach beyond the district or region. Its felt the public should remain merely 'interested spectators of action'.

Second, it is intuitively plausible; if you look at the institutional structures of the media and the pressures that act on them and so on and so forth, you would tend to realize that media corporations are still corporations. It would be surprising if they worked to undermine corporate interest.

prisoners of war, who include Jilil Bottom, Charles Sims Africa, Debbi Sims Africa, Herman Bell, Kojo Sababu, Lorenzo Stone-Bey, Mark Cook, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Mutulu Shakur, Ojore Lutalo, Phil Africa, Richard Mafundi Lake, Robert Seth Hayes, Sekou Kambui, Sundiata Acoli and Jamil Abdullallah Al-Amin.

It is only fitting that we remind ourselves that the Honorable Marcus Garvey was one of our first political prisoners targeted by the United States Government, indicted and convicted on trumped up charges of mail fraud. The masses of our people in the mid-1920s demanded Garvey's

release from prison. In 1927, more than 100,000 African people demonstrated and protested that he be released. Garvey was released in 1927 and deported from the United States as a condition of his release.

Let's free our political prisoners by joining the Reparations Movement and help intensify our demands for their release. Spread the word, sign and circulate the National Reparations Petition that we will take to the Congress of the United States before the November presidential election. [Editor's Note: This is a re-print from April 27, 2004 and nothing came of that Petition]

America's Prison Rate Soars

National News Brief

The Bureau of Justice Statistics report on America's soaring inmate population over the past four years states that one out of every 75 men are imprisoned. That's an increase of 2.9 percent from 2003, a total of 2.1 million people living in prison or jail and growing. Statistics for last year's prison rate show that 68 percent of prison and jail inmates were members of racial or ethnic minorities. At least 12 percent of all Black men in their 20s were in jails or prisons. Hispanic men accounted for 3.7 percent and White men came out last at 1.6 percent of the same age group.

BY R.G. MILLER



waiting on a test to either go up or come down, which in any case can never give you the proper reading in terms of your liver condition anyway! If your liver is already in the cirrhosis stage, after waiting six years you are probably damn near dead anyway.

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This system of non-treatment certainly falls short of curing an individual of hepatitis C infection. For persistently infected individuals, hepatitis C needs to be treated like any other chronic medical condition such as diabetes or hypertension at its best, and at its worst, hepatitis C needs to be treated aggressively with even the potential for liver transplantation. In between, there is a growing armory of therapies, both experimental and FDA approved, which may be used to treat prisoners and eradicate the virus. Anyone infected with the virus needs to be under the ongoing care of a physician knowledgeable in the rapid advances in hepatitis C treatment.

While this is expensive, it's also vital, because epidemiologic studies have estimated that up to 10% of so-called black males aged 40 to 50 have already been infected with hepatitis C. The Michigan Prison system is over 75% so-called black prisoners. Is this some type of sign? It's well known that medications to treat hepatitis C are available, and for people who do not respond to the traditional treatments, there are a growing number of experimental therapies at centers which perform clinical trials to assess efficacy of the new treatment. Referral to centers that have ongoing clinical trials for the treatment is prudent for the sufferer.

Blood tests as I have stated, are fine to note serum liver enzymes levels, but only the liver biopsy can tell you what stage the hepatitis C virus has reached. This is determined by a pathologist not a doctor or PA. The pathologist can confirm that the pattern of inflammation is consistent with hepatitis C infection and suggest an alternative diagnosis.

The liver biopsy also tells how badly the liver is damaged and estimate disease prognosis. The better the pathologist, the more accurate the prediction when the pathologist is one who routinely analyzes liver biopsies from people infected with HCV. To hire a pathologist of substandard only to give the MDOC the economic saving power versus the long haul problem, does not save the state or taxpayers money, and it certainly does not save the citizens' lives who will be faced with an epidemic once these prisoners are released back into society, both homosexual as well as the heterosexual population.

When cost is thought of, the liver biopsy is generally performed as an outpatient procedure. Eliminating hepatitis C virus from the body or preventing the development of cirrhosis secondary to hepatitis C virus infection is of the utmost importance in cancer prevention. It would save the state a hell-of-a-lot than trying to foot the bill of a cancer patient/prisoner. The virus can be cured in some cases, and it is therefore important to identify those individuals who are infected and eligible for current treatments:

It is also important to identify infected individuals to help stem the spread of the virus through exposure to contaminated blood which could occur in more ways than can be named. But until prisoners wake up and become politically active in forcing the corporate state to provide these most needed biopsies, many may not wake up at all!

Here are a few things a prisoner can do to help him or her self.... and push the state to provide: 1. More blood tests be done to watch changes in your liver; 2. more prisoners given liver biopsy; 3. medication to slow down the disease; 4. better diets with a better variety of healthy foods not taken from the main meal line; 5. the prisoner should get enough rest and exercise; 6. the diet include high calorie drinks (such as juices) and not pops/kool-Aids loaded with sugar, along with snack bags (frequent meals) for having been served smaller meals; 7. prison doctors being careful to avoid giving or avoiding certain medications (like, aspirin, ibuprofen, ketoprofen and naproxen); 8. In segregation (stop sharing manicure items, nail clippers, etc.) and never share toothbrushes, razors; 9. cover cuts, sores and any breaks in your skin.

REMEMBER, hepatitis C virus may show up quickly or may take 10-40 years before there are signs. Anytime you think you have the flu or a cold, be concerned.

by: Kwaja Adisa Owgbala

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When i first agreed to write "something about the media," i did so naively. The media (print, radio, television, internet, etc.) is, in fact, a topic on which there is no end. And with the rise of new technologies, the media is reaching a point of unfathomable enormousness. Everywhere we look, some form of the media is staring back at us. So where does a practical discussion begin?

Any serious discussion, i assume, confronts media politics: how it works, who makes it work, and primary objectives. Due to the lack of time and space, what is to follow is no more than a point of departure. Aimed at beginning a dialogue that will bring more people into the disussion--journalist, pundits, academics, everyday people like you and i--and hopefully provide a useful paradigm for future discussions.

The size of investment necessary to operate a mass media organization limits ownership. In each media medium a few large corporations dominate. These same corporations dominate other industries as well, making them wielders of czar like influence and power. Influence and power used to promote corporate interests.

Arguments have been raised that new technologies infringe on corporate dominance, and in some ways that is true. In recent months bloggers have exercised a considerable amount of influence on major media, in the now infamous Dan Rather scandal and the Jeff Gannon catastrophe. But it is a very weak argument.

On average, new technologies increase corporate leverage, since the cost are so high. Not to mention that the dominant form of mass media is television and radio, respectively. Most people come in contact with those two mediums more than any other mediums. Industries that are owned principally by major corporations whose primary concern is profit maximization.

The primary objective of the media organizations is to deliver audiences to advertisers, where they can be sold products. Rather it is a photo layout of a supermodel, constant rotation of pop' music or a raunchy sitcom, the objective is to get us to tune in not for the program but for the advertisements.

i am not suggesting that the programs are not important, marketing executives now plug products during the program. So we can be reading an article about depression, and pharmaceutical companies are plugging their products. We can be watching a television program, and a popular soft drink is strategically positioned in the background. Or we can turn on the radio, and the artist are singing about products. Still, the ultimate object is to transform a mass audience into a mass of consumers.

Our nation's prisons were never designed to be our primary mental health facility. Unless we do something about this, we are no better than those in the 19th century who locked up their mentally ill in their attics and basements and threw away

the key. In fact, we are worse because we better understand the nature of mental illness. We are worst, because we have chosen to incarcerate our mentally ill and thereby don't have to care for these mentally ill persons ourselves.

FREE OUR POLITICAL PRISONERS

Conrad W. Womell
-Guest Columnist- for The Final Call

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One of the critical demands of the Reparations Movement is the release of African-in-America political prisoners. The issue of political prisoners often gets swept aside in our demands in the Reparations Movement. This should not be. There are many sisters and brothers who have sacrificed much for the liberation of African people in America and are locked up unjustly in America's prisons and are political prisoners.

When we discuss political prisoners, we are talking about "those persons harassed, arrested, framed and imprisoned because of their relatively peaceful political activity against the destructive conditions that their people live under."

The goal of our political prisoners has been "to transfer power from the corrupt and racist business people, government officials, pseudo-intellectuals, policemen, judges and jailers and keep them down to a captive nation of people to be free." We should all be aware that Marcus Garvey, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, Sister Callie House and Huey P. Newton spent time in jail because they fought for our freedom, just as Brother Mumia Abu-Jamal remains a political prisoner for his uncompromising political journalism.

The origin of the campaign that has resulted in more than 100 women and men locked-up in America's prisons as political prisoners, many of them African-in-America, is related to the "secret war" that was waged against the Black Liberation Movement by the FBI.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, in the 1960s and 1970s, led this campaign. This illegal and top-secret onslaught was called the "Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO)" that targeted Black activists and organizations. Its goal was to disrupt,

dismantle, discredit and neutralize Black groups and leaders, thus seriously crippling our movement. They were successful.

That is why it is important for African people in America to join the Reparations Movement and help rebuild the Black Liberation Movement. One of our critical demands of the Reparations Movement must be the freedom of our political prisoners and prisoners of war.

The Jericho Movement explains: "The issue of whether or not political prisoners and prisoners of war exist inside the United States of America is one that the government of the United States has successfully been able to refute. They have been able to deny the existence of political prisoners and prisoners of war because we have not taken the battle to them and forced them to address this issue."

We can begin publicly addressing the issue of our political prisoners, in a massive way, on August 17 at the Millions for Reparations Mass Rally and ignite, educate inspire our people to expand the Reparations Movement to include, as a key component, our political prisoners.

In this context, the Jericho Movement further explains that there are brothers and sisters, men and women who, as a consequence of their political work/or organizational affiliations, were given criminal charges, arrested or captured, tried in courts and sent to prison. While trying them as criminals, the government maintained files on them referencing their political activities, designed to ensure they remain in prison. We must expose this tactic by the United States Government in our demands that our political prisoners be freed.

The Reparations Movement must be more energetic in demanding and calling for the release of our political prisoners and

by Bernice Powell Jackson

-Guest Columnist- for The Final Call

In the 19th century, many mentally ill patients were locked up in their homes by families embarrassed by their conduct and ignorant about the illness. But with more medical knowledge about the nature of mental illness, this was seen as barbaric and mental hospitals were created to care for these patients.

Problems surfaced with these mental hospitals in the latter half of the 20th century, many were closed, with the understanding that community treatment facilities would be put in place for their former patients. But these community-based services were never adequately funded, so today, instead of locking our mentally ill up in our homes, it seems we have opted to lock them in prisons and jails.

Indeed, according to a recent study by Human Rights Watch, one in six U.S. prisoners is mentally ill. In fact, there are three times more mentally ill persons in U.S. prisons than in mental health hospitals. And those numbers do not include mentally ill persons who are in jails or juvenile detention facilities.

"Prisons have become the nation's primary mental health facilities," said Jamie Fellner, director of Human Rights Watch's U.S. program. They estimate that there are between 200,000 and 300,000 mentally ill prisoners in U.S. prisons. Moreover, the rate of mental illness in our nation's prison population is three times higher than in the general population.

The fact that so many mentally ill persons are incarcerated can be traced directly to our under-funded, disorganized and fragmented community mental health services. When state and local governments shut down the large mental health facilities in the latter part of the 20th century, many people with mental illness, especially those who are poor, without health insurance, homeless and with substance abuse problems, were left without any mental health services.

"Unless you are wealthy, it can be next to impossible to receive mental health services in the community," said Ms. Fellner, adding, "many prisoners might never have ended up behind bars if publicly funded treatment had been available." An advisory commission appointed by President George Bush recently reported that the U.S. mental health system is "in shambles."

The Human Rights Watch report is based on two years of research and hundreds of interviews with prisoners, corrections officials, mental health experts and attorneys. It tells of prisoners who rant, rave, babble incoherently, talk with invisible companions, beat their heads against cell walls, cover themselves with feces, mutilate themselves and attempt suicide. In many instances, these prisoners find it difficult, if not impossible, to follow prison rules and then are punished for their behavior.

Moreover, corrections officials are being required to provide mental health facilities which they just are not equipped to do. Many patients need medication on a regular basis, which prison hospitals or guards are not able to provide, thus ensuring that mentally ill prisoners will deteriorate while they are incarcerated. Although many state prison mental health services have improved over the past two decades, the alarming rise in the number of mentally ill prisoners, at the same time as decreasing state budgets, has meant that the much needed services for these prisoners often have not been available.

As a result, untrained staff have sometimes escalated confrontations with mentally ill prisoners and mentally ill prisoners can accumulate extensive disciplinary records resulting in their being put into isolated, windowless segregation cells. In other instances, other prisoners have abused or attacked them.

The treatment of mentally ill prisoners is a part of international human rights laws and standards. Thus, Human Rights Watch points out that, if the U.S. abided by such standards, the plight of American mentally ill prisoners would improve dramatically. In addition, such prisoners are protected under the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment.

Now, federal legislation is being proposed by Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH) and Congressman Ted Strickland (D-OH) that would provide federal grants to divert mentally ill offenders into treatment programs, rather than jail or prison, and to improve the quality of mental health services inside our prisons and jails. Called the "Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act," it begins to address some of the problems highlighted in the Human Rights Watch report.

In order for the major media organizations to meet their primary objective there are some cardinal rules (politics) that always remain in command. One cardinal rule is to avoid controversy. Material that may offend a portion of the audience or, even worst, major advertisers and other financial sponsors, cannot be tolerated.

Adhering to this rule has broad consequences in terms of "program content." Executives and producers are never sure what will or will not come off as controversial. Thus, another cardinal rule is, keeping the content simple.

Simplicity denotes engaging an audience's emotions, not their intellect. The formula is sex, violence and an extraordinary emphasis on the life-styles of the rich and famous. An excess of what most people desire.

The space for political debate, opposition and struggle are virtually non-existence. Even so-called news programs have shifted toward a more entertainment/personality based product. The dynamics of simplicity have been cultivated, a word that seems totally out of context, to stay away from real economic, political and social issues, especially contemporary issues, it is reduced to a sound bite. With no authentic diversity of opinion. Which actually reflects another cardinal rule, keep the content consistent.

The content of the media is virtually uniform. When one media organization turns a profit, that "model for profit" is reproduced by other organizations e.g., reality television. When it comes to economic or political issues, without even attempting to include a variety of perspectives, presents us with some "democrat" or "republican," who can explain matters. Obviously better than the people affected because seldom do we hear from them.

What we should come to understand is democrats and republicans may disagree on tactics, but seldom, if ever, do they disagree on the goal. So no matter what media organization we tune in to, we are likely to see and hear the same individuals. This too boils down to financial considerations. The least expensive way to procure a source, is to call on political elite's, who jump at the free publicity.

I do not want to give the impression that everything about the media is negative, because it isn't. But a media that places profit before content leaves a lot to be desired...It is not inconceivable that this can be corrected. Not by trying to reform the existing media organizations but, by creating new, independent media organizations. Media mediums that structure into their system, legitimate public participation. Public participation that offers a view of broad diversity of ideas and world views. Ideas and world views that challenge our beliefs, make us uncomfortable at times and inspires a greater expression of our humanity.

Rebuild to Win!

