Right On! #27



Newsletter of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party - Prison Chapter

PO Box 4362, Allentown, PA 18105

EDITORIAL:



Things took a dramatic turn this fall, when a few dozen people who were fed up with the overall situation decided to take their protest to the doorstep of the headquarters of the global monopoly-capitalist empire and occupy a nearby park on Wall Street. This turned out to be the needed spark to ignite a prairie fire of popular protest and rebellion that quickly spread across the country and around the world, which has illuminated the true nature of things and exposed the naked truth of monopoly-capitalist dictatorship behind the façade of "Democracy," and polls show that the majority of people in this country have gotten the message.

But Blacks and other people of color have mostly been passive onlookers. Many still have hopes that the "First Black President" will surprise us all and prove to be a true son of the people (and not a real son of a bitch) who is not the pawn of the super-rich he has so far shown himself to be. Some are put off by the predominance of white middle class people in the Occupy Wall Street movement. But others are coming forward through groups like Occupy The Hood and C.R.O.W.S. to rally the people of the most oppressed class to spread this protest movement among the 40% who have the least stake in preserving this rotten system dominated by the oligarchy of the richest 1%.

Our communities have been hard hit by the economic crisis and decades of systematic "War on the Poor." The policies of "down-sizing" and "out-sourcing" of industry coupled with "institutionalized racism" have condemned a generation to long-term unemployment or part-time wage slavery and millions to years of mass incarceration, parole and probation. Drugs and guns have been poured into the communities to promote self-destruction and fratricidal gang-banging. Decadence and dehumanization have been promoted to deaden our responses to conditions of poverty and oppression.

To turn all this around we must *OCCUPY OURSELVES* with being our own liberators. NO SAVIOUR IS COMING! Not from the Democratic Party and not from Heaven! The only way forward is to rely upon ourselves, organize ourselves and educate ourselves. We are the leadership we need to change the world. We must become the vanguard of the revolution the world needs to create social justice and equality for all. History has put us in position to rise to fulfill this role!

The original Black Panther Party (BPP) founded by Huey P Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland California created a model for building a community-based revolutionary movement within the "Belly of the Beast." This was at a time of high-tide of revolutionary struggle in the world, but conditions were not ripe to carry the struggle to victory at that time. Monopoly-Capitalism still had great reserves and a few tricks up its sleeve.

The system is now much weaker and deeper in crisis. Its social base is crumbling and masses of people around the world are fed up and looking for a way to get out from under it. A new wave of the world proletarian socialist revolution is on the rise and has the potential to go much farther than the last. Now is not the time to be passive onlookers, now is the time to shine!

Dare to Struggle – Dare to Win!

All Power to the People!

NABPP-PC
PO Box 4362
Allentown, PA 18105

NABPP-PC Points of Discipline

1. We will not steal from the people, bully them, take liberties with them, nor disrespect them, nor use Party membership or rank to gain personal advantages or benefits from Party members or the people.
2. We will practice and promote respect for the rights of individuals, oppressed nations and peoples, including the disabled, wimyn, children, elderly, gay/lesbian, all ethnic and racial groups, and especially the working classes of all nations and nationalities.
3. We will practice and defend the "Right of Free Speech," and to assemble and protest.
4. We will fearlessly speak the truth and expose lies and corruption.
5. We will treat the false beliefs and prejudices of others as "loads upon their backs" and endeavor to enlighten and uplift them.
6. We will strive to set the best example for the people through upright conduct and honesty, leading and educating by example.
7. We will not be used to spy upon the people nor reveal their secrets to their enemies.
8. We will serve the people "heart and soul" to the best of our abilities.
9. We will conduct ourselves with honor and strive to be the people's pride.
10. We will not practice discrimination within the Party's ranks based upon gender or sexual orientation. All ranks and leadership positions within the Party will be equally available to men and wimyn, with their qualifications being determined by their proven abilities and commitment, and they will be equally respected and obeyed by lower ranks.
11. We will practice criticism and self-criticism.





Kevin "Rashid" Johnson
Minister of Defense, NABPP-PC

What is a "Comrade" and Why We Use the Term

The concept of "Comrade" has a special meaning and significance in revolutionary struggle. We have often been asked to explain our use of this term, especially by our peers who are new to the struggle, instead of more familiar terms like "brotha," "homie," "cousin," "dog," nigga," etc.

Foremost, is that we aspire to build a society based upon equality and a culture of revolutionary transformation, so we need to purge ourselves of the tendency to use terms of address that connote cliques and exclusive relationships. A comrade can be a man or a woman of any color or ethnicity, but definitely a fellow fighter in the struggle against all oppression.

Terms like "mister" or "youngster" imply a difference of social status, entitlement to greater or lesser respect and built-in concepts of superiority or inferiority. Terms like "bitch," "dog," nigga," "ho," etc., are degrading and disrespectful – even when used affectionately – as some do to dull the edge of their general usage in a world that disrespects us.

"Comrade," however, connotes equality and respect. It implies "I've got your back," and "we are one." Comrades stand united unconditionally, and if need be, to the death. It implies a relationship that is inclusive, not exclusive, and not based on any triviality but revolutionary class solidarity. It represents the socialist future we seek to represent in the struggles of today, and the eventual triumph of classless communist society.

Most forms of address used by New Afrikans carry subtle implications of differing status and worth, or were originally meant to insult and dehumanize us. Embracing these terms has led to our subconsciously embracing these roles, and feeling and believing we are inferior and treating each other as worth less than others. So it is definitely important that we remind ourselves constantly that we are equal to and as good as anyone else and address each other accordingly. As Malcolm X put it in an interview with the *Village Voice* in 1965:

"The greatest mistake of the movement has been trying to organize a sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake the people up first, then you'll get action."

"Wake them up to their exploitation?" the interviewer asked.

"No," Malcolm replied, "to their humanity, to their own worth."

Conscious use of the term "Comrade" instead of the many disparaging terms of address popular today, explicitly connects all people up as humans and equals. It reminds us of our interdependence for survival; promotes relations of equality, friendship and camaraderie between all oppressed and exploited people; it expresses the unified outlook of the proletariat; and it will promote a change in people's outlook and thinking. It's use identifies those committed to the revolutionary struggle and represents the future in the struggles of today.

As Amilcar Cabral expressed in "Our People are Our Mountians": "I call you 'comrades' rather than 'brothers and sisters' because if we are brothers and sisters it's not from choice, it's no commitment; but if you are my comrade, I am your comrade too, and that's a commitment and a responsibility. This is the political meaning of 'comrade'."

In the interpyrsonal sense, camaraderie binds people by respect, mutual support and trust, making organizations cohesive and stable. It builds and cements unity in the process of struggle, generating mutual confidence between people, affirming that we can rely upon each other regardless of the dangers that come from standing for the people and social justice for all.

Examples of genuine camaraderie are inspirational to the people and build their willingness to make a commitment to the struggle. The development and maintenance of organizational structure depends on the close and genuine camaraderie of the revolutionaries – what we call Panther Love!



NABPP-PC

New Rules of Conduct of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter

January 1, 2012

All functional members of the NABPP-PC shall obey these rules and the founding "Rules of Discipline and General Directives." All leading cadre and formations of the Party shall uphold and enforce these rules, and report any serious violations of these rules to the Ministry of Justice of the Party and all responsible comrades and higher bodies within the Party. Responsible comrades shall conduct fact finding investigations to determine guilt or innocence and recommend a method of correction with input from other comrades. The method of correction shall be appropriate to the seriousness of the violation.

Each Party member is responsible to know and abide by these rules and to report any violations.

The Rules:

1. This is a party of struggle and you must strive to develop your knowledge and leadership abilities and your integrity and commitment to serve the people and conduct yourself so as to win the trust, respect and confidence of the people.
2. Know and understand the Party's 10-Point Program, its history and its significance at this point in history and be able to explain and defend it to others.
3. Read at least two hours a day to develop your knowledge and keep abreast of what is going on in the world.
4. Develop your understanding of Historical Dialectical Materialism, which is the philosophical basis of our Party's ideological and political line, and apply it in your political work and analysis.
5. Show Panther Love to your comrades and strive to encourage and uplift them, recognize and praise their contributions, be open and above board, practice criticism and self-criticism and do not be liberal.
6. Maintain a regimen of healthy physical exercise and diet and keep yourself fit for duty as best you can. Don't abuse your health with excessive drinking or drugs.
7. Be reliable, punctual and good to your word. Carry out your assigned tasks responsibly, effectively, to the best of your ability and with a good attitude.
8. Practice collective leadership and not commandism.
9. Hold and attend regular meetings, at least weekly or bi-weekly, discuss things thoroughly and practice mutual criticism in a comradely way. Strive to reach consensus. Uphold decisions by the majority.
10. If arrested or interrogated by the authorities, give your name and ID only. Make no statements without an attorney being present.
11. Do not discuss Party business or comrades with any law enforcement officer, agent or informer.
12. Know your Legal First Aid.
13. Attend and conduct political education classes, forums and study circles.
14. Familiarize yourself with martial arts and techniques of self-defense. Do not use violence except in the extremity of self-defense.
15. Know your medical first aid.
16. Do not allow anyone to put a "gang" or "terrorist" label on the Party or the United Panther Movement (UPM), or by word or action give support to such slanders.
17. Support the Party with regular donations.
18. Do not take or borrow anything from the people without permission or misuse funds entrusted to you.



Kevin "Rashid" Johnson
Minister of Defense, NABPP-PC

UNITY – STRUGGLE – TRANSFORMATION: LEADERSHIP & CADRE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The object of a revolutionary organization is to unite (and unite with), mobilize, organize, and lead masses of oppressed people to achieve fundamental economic, political, social change and collective security. Founded in 2005, the New Afrikan Black Panther Party Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC) arose within the most oppressed strata of U.S. society, the imprisoned masses, to take up the banner of revolutionary struggle on behalf of New Afrikans and all oppressed and exploited people. We aspire to become, but are not yet, a functional vanguard party of the oppressed.

We will be *formally* constituted once we transition to the outside, build bases in the oppressed communities, hold a founding convention and elect a free world central committee and an executive committee (politburo). We will be *functionally* constituted only when the oppressed urban masses embrace us as their revolutionary leadership.

Even while we remain a primarily prison-based organization, we have an important revolutionary role to play, which is to transform the *slave pens of oppression* into *schools of liberation*. This is the first phase of our Party's strategy, along with transforming the oppressed communities into *base areas of cultural, social and political revolution* in the context of building a *worldwide united front against capitalist-imperialism*. The two aspects of our strategy are dialectically related and will advance the overall strategy of advancing the World Proletarian Socialist Revolution.

At this point, comrades are learning and struggling for ideological and political clarity on how to build and consolidate the Party's structure and a mass anti-racist, anti-imperialist and revolutionary movement around it. There are issues we need to work out relating to organizing on both the inside and outside. There are issues, some of them long-standing, that have been raised by our supporters and detractors we need to address. Some of these people do not understand, or refuse to accept, the need for revolutionary leadership, discipline and organization. There is also the question of who should be in leadership positions and how to achieve a balance between democracy and centralism.

On Organization and Security

The term "organizing" is often used loosely on the Left, especially by those who oppose forming, joining or subordinating themselves to any sort of disciplined political organization. Although they may exhort the virtues of "solidarity," they actually practice extreme individualism, which runs counter to building a movement for collective social change.

Obviously, one cannot be a political organizer and not be part of a political organization. One implies the other. An organization is a body of people – not one person acting alone – who share common purpose and goals and have an organizational structure. The members must perform certain functions assigned to them that advance the purpose of the organization. This calls for leadership and a degree of discipline or everyone will be acting individually without accountability or responsibility, which is the definition of *disorganization*, and this leads to the opposite of "solidarity."

Joining and remaining in an organization involves important considerations, such as whether one trusts, believes in, agrees with, and understands the organization's purpose and goals. To the more mature and committed members, these are issues of special concern and determine whether they will whole-heartedly commit themselves on a long-term basis to the organization and its goals and purpose. Transparency is therefore important so people know, understand and trust the organization and what it is about. Without this, the organization cannot have even the foundations for 'security.'

Comrade Safiya Bukheri, a former BPP and BLA cadre explains:

"By definition, security means freedom from danger, fear and anxiety. Individual and organizational safety and well-being begin with the knowledge of what you're about, what the organization is about, your limitations,

your strengths and the organization's strengths. Knowledge is the key to security. History has shown that the best security depends on the internal strength of the organization and the internal principles of the people who make up the organization."[1]

As an example of solid organizational and individual principles, she points to the creed of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA), which states, "I will steal nothing from a brother or sister, cheat no brother or sister, misuse no brother or sister, inform on no brother or sister and spread no gossip." These principles, she observed, expresses...

"an extremely important component of individual and organizational security. The knowledge that the person next to you – the person working beside you – will not cheat you, lie and spread gossip about you is the basis for your feeling secure in your environment and within your organization. The ability to trust your comrades implicitly and to know with certainty what they will do in any circumstance is the best security.

"The question then, is how do we get to this point? It begins with knowing what you're about – what you want and what you believe and how far you will go to obtain it. The reciprocal reality is knowing what the organization is about. If the purpose and mission of the organization is clear, not subject to interpretation, then people joining will not be able to say that they thought the organization was about one thing when they joined only to find out later it was about something really different.

"This means that both the individual and the organization must be open and honest."[2]

Our Party's rules embrace standards akin to the RNA Creed, which actual and potential members must know and obey. An important criteria of Party recruitment is that one's internal principles be proven to be compatible with the Party's. The comrades also must know, understand, and commit themselves to *our Ten Point Program and Platform*, which clearly sets out "what we want" and "what we believe." They must also understand and adhere to our ideological philosophy, which is *Historical and Dialectical Materialism* (HDM) and not some form of subjective idealism, such as dogmatism, sentimentalism, pragmatism or metaphysics.

HDM begins with the premise that objective reality exists independent of our understanding it, and that concrete analysis of concrete conditions – tested in practice – is the only true foundation for political theory. It teaches us that everything is in motion and that quantitative changes give rise to qualitative leaps of development. An historical understanding of a thing's development and understanding the internal contradictions and the effect of things happening in connection to it enables us to see the potentiality to accelerate its development.

All things develop and transform through the struggle between their contradictory aspects. Evolution gives rise to revolution. One divides into two creating a new unity of opposites. Revolution is the main trend in the world.

Prior to recruitment into the Party, comrades must prove themselves to be serious and dedicated to the struggle. They must stand tall and be willing to stand firm in the face of adversity and repression and be able to withstand isolation and even torture. Their commitment to advancing the struggle to victory must be that of a "professional revolutionary," who carries on when others falter or flee to safety and comfort. Their credo must be "for self nothing, for the masses everything!" Only comrades of this caliber will win the trust of the masses and make our Party the true vanguard of the revolution.

The Party has no private agenda to pursue. It exists solely to serve the people. It must never alienate itself from them nor set itself above them but rather seek their supervision and guidance. It is their party, not ours. In all things it must uphold and practice the Mass Line.

This work calls for planning, disciple and accountability. To proceed without a plan, without discipline and order is counter-productive and irresponsible. Our individual moral outrage and our love for the people should be the fuel that powers our actions, but our actual course of action should be based upon a strategic plan and carried out with iron discipline and organizational coordination. All this requires strong organizational leadership.

On Leadership

No revolutionary movement can hope to succeed without a strong revolutionary leadership, and no one can be permitted to participate in such a movement who is not willing to commit themselves to following the leadership and accepting the discipline required by the struggle. To think otherwise is idealism and opportunism.

As already discussed, an organizer belongs to and is loyal to an organization. The organization collectively devises ways to achieve certain goals. The organizer is in fact a leader. This is especially true when the work of the organizer is influencing and affecting people *outside* the organization among the broad masses of the people. So the organizer leads others, whether for good or ill, and regardless of whether or not they admit to being a leader and accept the responsibility that goes with that.

The same truth applies to individuals outside of organizations who seek to inform, motivate and guide the actions of others. They are in fact leaders and bear responsibilities.

But in as much as a revolutionary organization that seeks to lead a mass movement must have leaders, these leaders must win the consent of those who they seek to lead. It must be earned by proven merit and consistent practice. They must listen to and learn from the masses if they seek to teach and be listened to – we must be both teachers and students! As students, we learn from the masses about their conditions, needs and concerns, and being *of* the oppressed masses ourselves, we share their conditions alongside them

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[1] Safiya Bukhari, *The War Before: The True Story of Becoming A Black Panther, Keeping the Faith in Prison & Fighting for Those Left Behind*, (Feminist Press, 2010), p. 37

[2] Ibid p. 37

on a daily basis. We must attentively listen to their views, learn from their strengths, and remain close to them. If we think they are wrong, we must patiently explain why after hearing them out. But we don't know everything, so we must be good at listening and learning, accept criticism and correcting our mistakes.

As teachers, we take the masses' raw and unorganized ideas and by applying HDM and our understanding of this oppressive system as a whole, return their ideas to them in the form of programs, examples and solutions which involve and empower them. This is the essence of the Mass Line!

In this dialectical relationship of student and teacher, leader and masses, we don't quibble over assuming the role of leader because it is inherently impossible to teach and influence people's thoughts and actions without assuming a leadership role. Since we are constantly teaching and learning, we are always giving or accepting leadership.

So unlike those "Leftists" who shun the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist revolutionary line, we don't reject the role and responsibility of leaders and leadership. Indeed, we recognize that in class-divided society, the thinking of every person and group reflects the ideas of the dominant class in part or in whole, and as soon as any person or group speaks out or puts pen to paper to influence others they assume the authority of leadership. In as much as their ideas reflect the teaching and indoctrination of the ruling class, they're serving that class in its dictatorship over society.

Conversely, in as much as they have freed their minds of this indoctrination and revolutionized their thinking, their speaking out or putting pen to paper is an act of revolutionary leadership. That's what revolutionary organizers do, they teach and they learn from the masses about how we oppressed people can become our own liberators. Revolutionary leadership is what Panthers are about.

M-L-M illuminates the revolutionary line of our Party and the United Panther Movement (UPM). M-L-M scientifically sums up the lessons of the class struggle and the experience of revolutionary proletariat from the mid-19th Century to the present through the application of HDM by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and many other revolutionary thinkers and leaders. Most particularly, our Party's line is illuminated by the work of the original BPP, particularly Huey P. Newton, Fred Hampton and George Jackson, New Afrikan freedom fighters like WEB DuBois, Malcolm X and Walter Rodney, as well as Afrikan revolutionaries such as Amilcar Cabral, Franz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah.

Intelligent people who desire to change the world seek to learn from the contributions of others and to illuminate their practice with the most advanced and scientific understanding of revolutionary theory. Who among us who oppose this oppressive system based upon human exploitation do not aspire to influence the ideas, and by extension the actions, of others in relation to this system? Therefore it is deception to claim that we do not aspire to be or approve of leaders. And who would deny that revolution is the ultimate act of authority?

There is actually a class basis for this sort of thinking. Furthermore, consider how absurd it would be for a teacher to challenge and change your beliefs (say about capitalism for example) that affect how you perceive and relate to the world at the most fundamental levels and tell you go forth and apply these teachings to change the world and then deny they were giving you leadership? How much more absurd if they did not plug you into an organization and movement of like-minded people? Leadership and organization go hand in hand.

Here is what distinguishes genuine revolutionary teachers from elitist philosophers: The revolutionary teacher not only *consciously* teaches what is wrong in the world but they also lead in correcting it, building organization among the masses to create a new reality, teaching by example and participation.

Mao Tse-tung summed up this Marxist line saying: "Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying these laws actively to change the world.... only social practice can be the criterion of truth."

This is where the traditional "Left" falls short. In the manner of petty bourgeois intellectuals, they analyze, criticize, and interpret the world in various ways, but they fail to bring their analysis down to the level of practical application to change the oppressive conditions. At best, they resort to individual counter-cultural or academic rebelliousness which does nothing to organize or empower the masses. It is all about self-validation and feeling good about their radical self-identity.

And why?

Because their class stand prevents it, which is the principle reason why many of them reject the need for and function of a revolutionary leadership. While in fact *they* act as leaders and teachers of the class stand of those who talk about but don't dare to organize to solve the problems of the oppressed class – namely the petty bourgeoisie, the so-called "middle class." Deep down, many of these "radicals" don't want to change things in any fundamental way because they have privileges and comforts under the status quo and dread of the exercise of power from below.

So while they protest and arouse the discontent of others, they don't want to start something that will empower the poor and go all the way to overthrowing the dictatorship of the rich. They only want to protest the things that oppress and disempower them. This leaves the people without all-the-way leadership, which leads to spontaneous rebellions subject to both co-option and violent suppression, leading to demoralization of the masses and continued business as usual for the exploiting class.

We have seen this cycle repeated over and over in the oppressed communities and prisons. This is why we created the New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter and the United Panther Movement, because we recognized the need for a truly revolutionary *vanguard* party and movement. Vanguard means "out in front," We saw that things were not going to change until people got serious and took on the responsibility to lead the people's struggle to victory

On the Practice of Cadres

A revolutionary vanguard is only as strong and solid as its members or cadre, who must be rooted among the masses in struggle. Thus it is vital that the cadre be good at communicating and connecting with other oppressed people. They must be the natural leaders of the people whom others look to and seek the opinions of. Her or his love for the people must run deep. As Ché Guevara once said: "Let me say, at the risk of seeming ridiculous, that a true revolutionary is motivated by great feelings of love." However, the work of a revolutionary is not measured by motive alone.

> "How can we tell the good from the bad – by the motive (the subjective intention) or by the effect (social practice)? Idealists stress motive and ignore effect, while mechanical materialists stress effect and ignore motive. In contradiction to both, we dialectical materialists insist on unity of motive and effect. The motive of serving the masses is inseparably linked with winning their approval; the two must be united. The motive of serving the individual or a small clique is not good, nor is it good to have the motive of serving the masses without the effect of winning their approval and benefiting them. In examining the subjective intention of a writer or artist, that is, whether his motive is correct or good, we do not judge by his declarations but by the effects of his actions (mainly his works) on the masses in society. The criteria for judging subjective intention or motive is social practice and its effect." – Mao Tse-tung[3]

Of course not everyone among the people will be receptive, interested in intellectual and political growth, or even friendly. We have found, however, that at this time, many prisoners are, but they are hampered by limited access to literature and information and rules that strictly limit what they may receive and how much property they may keep. So collective pooling of materials and cadre-led study circles within the prisons are very important. On the other hand, many do not have a high degree of literacy or think reading is not "cool." So, it is important we do verbal agitation and organize discussions, particularly on the yard.

Cadre must be patient, sensitive and tolerant, and most important, be good at listening. Some prisoners have been beaten down to where they have withdrawn into themselves and we must reach them before we can teach them. Others are so full of rage that they reject reason and are locked into individualistic and self-destructive behavior.

To serve the people we must take a genuine interest in them and demonstrate Panther Love towards them. Don't just talk at people or expect them to open up to you right away. We must strive to understand where they are at and what their concerns are to build a relationship of camaraderie with them. One can always find some points of common interest. Our politics flow from our love for the people and represent the highest interests of humanity, so they naturally uplift and inspire people once we get their attention.

Most all of our cadre will be capable communicators, although one should struggle to excel in this area. It was actually in prison that Fidel Castro developed his exceptional abilities as a motivational speaker. Fred Hampton, another exceptional communicator, once said: "I listen to anyone who speaks well." It is important that we are able to reach people's deepest feelings and longings.

Whether good speakers or not, all of our cadre will have specific skills that they can work on and develop to serve the struggle and enhance the effectiveness of our Party. As in any organization, everyone has contributions to make and a part to play.

> "No one person can do everything, but every person can do something – and all jobs are more or less equally important. That is, the 'soldier' is no more important (may in fact be less important) than the person putting out the newsletter, or the person organizing the students, or the person agitating on issues such as no-rent housing, or people's control of the air waves..." – James Yaki Sayles[4]

And not all cadre will be equally advanced in applying the principles of HDM to problem-solving. At this point, many cadre have very little or no training or understanding of this revolutionary science, due to our loose organization in the prisons and difficulty in obtaining suitable study materials, which we must resolutely struggle to overcome. Because to apply any method of study other than a correct application of HDM will inevitable lead to the errors of dogmatism or some other form of subjective idealism. Therefore, it is of primary importance that the leading cadre master this method and train others to train others. Like shooting at a target, proper instruction and practice makes all the difference.

It is also imperative for the organizational life of our Party and creating the caliber of leadership that can lead the masses to take history into their hands that we train our cadre to excel at every aspect of party building, mass organization, and the strategy and tactics of creating a worldwide united front against capitalist-imperialism. The Party and mass organizations it creates and builds must be strong structures with strong internal unity and able to withstand overt repression and attempted covert disruption by the agents of repression.

The mass organizations must have a strong democratic character and be rooted in the oppressed communities where our mass work is concentrated. We must be good at bringing people in to participate in our events and programs and at reaching out to all strata and groupings of the people in the communities; in particular the youth, women, veterans and members of lumpen street organizations, families of prisoners, as well as workers old and young. The New Afrikan Black Panther Party must be broadly based in the communities.

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[3] Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol III p. 88-89

[4] James Yaki Sayles, *Meditations on Franz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth: New Afrikan Revolutionary Writings by James Yaki Sayles.* (Montreal, Q. Kersplebedeb/Chicago, Il. Spear & Shield, 2010), p. 184-185

All of this is important to do effective organizing, but what is key is revolutionary leadership. Cadre must be thoroughly knowledgeable on many subjects and able to converse intelligently one on one or in front of a group. To enhance our ability to serve, and learn from, the people, cadre must expand their all-around knowledge through study and following the news. In all things we must seek to uncover the truth, which requires investigation.

Collective leadership is key to building a strong party and movement. Collective wisdom brought out through democratic discussion on every level of the Party helps us to uncover the truth and illuminate our practice. An army of "professionals" will try to misdirect and discredit us as they do every liberation movement. This too highlights the importance of collective leadership and inner-party democracy, where we pool our knowledge and experience to collectively arrive at truth and make sound decisions.

We must follow Sun Tzu's direction to "know your enemy and know yourself, and in a hundred battles you will never face defeat." This applies at all levels – strategic and tactical – and on all fronts – cultural, educational, economic, political and military. It is especially important in cadre development. Because to have cadre assigned to roles where their particular strengths are going to apply is conducive to achieving the Party's goals. We must be good as assessing comrades' strengths and weaknesses and at using their strengths to overcome their weaknesses.

By knowing the enemy's strengths and weaknesses, we shall know where to assail and where to avoid him, and we shall not become arrogant after a few successes nor despondent after a few losses. When we are able to remain objective in the face of both victories and defeats and can adjust our tactics accordingly, there is no such thing as an unbeatable foe nor an insurmountable obstacle to victory. The use of wrong tactics is generally caused by failure to objectively analyze conditions in the first place.

We must be mindful not to hold ourselves up as authorities on matters we have not investigated thoroughly. "No investigation, no right to speak," is Mao's famous dictum. When it becomes apparent we lack necessary information to make a good decision, we should seek it out without hesitation.

> "To put forward a correct political line for the new Party, we must have concrete analysis of concrete conditions on the major questions: class struggle, the national question, trade union work, the woman question, the international situation, etc." – V.I. Lenin[5]

On Cadre Purpose

As already pointed out, cadre are the component parts of the vanguard party and its basic units, which are the Party collectives. Together they form the "nervous system" of the movement, linking the Party's HQ with all its parts.

The cadre must be good at building bases of support for the revolution among the people (winning the masses to the Party's revolutionary line and organizing them into mass organizations that advance the revolutionary struggle), and be prepared to do what the Party requires of them to the best of their abilities. A revolutionary movement can only be as effective as its leadership prepares it to be. As Mao pointed out, "When revolution fails, it is the fault of the vanguard party." Therefore cadre development is crucial.

> "We must purposely train tens of thousands of cadres and leaders versed in Marxism-Leninism, politically far-sighted, competent in work, full of spirit of self-sacrifice, capable of taking problems on their own and devoted to serving the nation, the cadres and the party. It is on these cadres and leaders that the party relies on its links with the membership and the masses, and it is relying on their firm leadership of the masses that the party can succeed in defeating the enemy. Such cadres and leaders must be free from selfishness, from individualistic heroism, ostentation, sloth, passivity, and sectarian arrogance, and they must be selfless, national and class heroes, such are the qualities and style of work demanded by the members, cadres and leaders of our party." – Mao Tse-tung

Mao demonstrated the indispensably of good cadre in revolutionary struggle. So too did Amilcar Cabral, Afrika's most outstanding revolutionary leader. As the founder of the revolutionary vanguard party of Guinea Bissau, the PAIGC[6], he proved that the development of revolutionary cadre is key to the success of a revolutionary movement. In 1959, oppressed workers Guinea Bissau plunged blindly and recklessly into armed revolt against the Portuguese colonialists. This disastrous failure led Comrade Cabral to reassess the situation and their tactics. He then spent three years organizing and leading patient political education and doing preparatory work across the country, training a thousand party cadre.

> "We prepared a number of cadre from the group [of pre-classed semi-intellectual urban youth], some from people employed in commerce and other wage-earners, and even some peasants, so that they could acquire what you might call a working class mentality....When these cadre returned to the rural areas they inculcated a certain mentality into the peasants, and it is among these cadre that we have chosen the people who are now leading the struggle." – Amilcar Cabral[7]

These PAIGC cadre reignited the struggle in 1963, winning and mobilizing immense and immediate mass support, which quickly liberated vast sections of the country from Portuguese control. By 1969, two-thirds of the countryside was liberated, and only five years later, Portuguese control was completely overthrown, even though Cabral had been assassinated by Portuguese agents a year before. It was the cadre, trained and prepared by Cabral, that led the people to victory.

As we discussed in a previous article, the original Black Panther Party's efforts to lead the mass struggle here in Amerika met with failure, largely because it neglected to

[5] V.I. Lenin, *What is to Be Done?*

[6] African Independence Party of Guinea and Cape Verde Islands

[7] Amilcar Cabral, *The Politics of Struggle* (1964)

train and root its members in revolutionary proletarian ideology.[5] Instead, its cadre retained and acted upon the values and perspectives of other classes, particularly the lumpen-proletariat and urban petty bourgeoisie, and even tried to advance a lumpen (as opposed to proletarian) political theory to validate this.

Failures and reversals of revolutionary mass movements, here and around the world, have resulted, in large part, because of the failure to develop a solid core of revolutionary proletarian leadership. In the past, revolutionary movements have relied upon the petty-bourgeoisie to supply the intellectuals for leadership positions and this has proven to be a weakness, as these tend to be vacillating elements prone to right and "left" opportunism and revisionism.

Because of its position in class society, the petty-bourgeoisie vacillates between the bourgeoisie and laboring masses in outlook and interests. They have had the advantages of better education and standard of living over the poor and working masses, and though radicalized, they tend to retain bourgeois ideology and prejudices which they bring with them into the workers' movement.

The petty-bourgeoisie have produced some fine revolutionary intellectuals and leaders for the revolutionary proletarian movement, such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, Cabral, Nkrumah and so on, but on the whole, many more have been disappointments. As a class, they are no so ready to commit "class suicide," as Cabral put it, and adopt the revolutionary perspective of the proletariat. Instead, they impose their own perspectives and prejudices on the movement and resist the development of all-the-way revolutionary class struggle and consciousness.

However, the development of the decline of capitalist-imperialism has called forth a strategy of mass incarceration in Amerika, aimed primarily at the New Afrikans and other people of color in the urban communities. Prisons have proven to be powerful settings for the creation of revolutionary intellectuals from the oppressed class, such as; Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver, George Jackson, Hasan Shakur and James Yaki Sayles. Malcolm X even dubbed them the "poor man's universities."

Here, poor proletarians have both time to do deep study and access to revolutionary books and literature. This is what the NABPP-PC is tapping into and is the basis for our strategy of "turning the 'slave pens of oppression' into 'schools of liberation'...," which is taking our movement down a different path of development. Our object is not to indoctrinate prisoners with a political line from outside, but to develop the intellectual basis for formulating our own line and training cadre to provide leadership to build the movement on the outside, among the people in the oppressed communities, independent of the petty-bourgeois-dominated Left.

In training cadre, we need to do more than give them materials to read and expect them to spontaneously develop. We need to create Party-led study/discussion circles and an interactive study program as part of our strategy of transforming the prisons into 'schools of liberation.' We need to train prisoners to be critical and tactical thinkers. Cadre need to be flexible and apply critical analysis to developing and amending tactical plans. We need cadre to be creative and innovative in applying the Party's general line.

We need to encourage cadre to go beyond learning a few basic concepts and develop in-depth understand of all aspects of the struggle, strategy and tactics, different techniques and methods, and historical applications. Overall intellectual development must be stressed. Intellectual skills, such as doing research, writing and debating must be developed.

The Party should assimilate and circulate good ideas and practices from the cadre. We should develop information sharing through our newsletters and implement new ideas and practices that arise in our organizational work.

Cadre must be good at teaching organizational skills to others. They should also be conscious to set the best possible examples in character and conduct at all times. This is important because our role is not to exercise political power over the masses but to empower them. Our example must be of selfless dedication to the masses and their best interests, helping them to create and build institutions of people's power in the communities and programs to serve their specific survival needs, enabling them to solve problems in their daily lives.

It is also why we must guard against allowing just anyone into the Party or to remain there if they don't have the proper motivation and dedication. Party cadre should be more disciplined and self-sacrificing than ordinary people. People should look to them as role models. People tend to characterize a whole movement by what they observe in its members they have contact with. This places a heavy responsibility on each and every Panther cadre to always represent the Party in the best way.

If we deviate from the Party's principles, discipline and program, people will think our Party is a joke, a sham and a hustle. They will not support our Party or listen to our message. The enemy will use our mistakes and shortcomings to vilify and discredit us in the eyes of the people. Instead of leading we will become another obstacle to the people's liberation.

This too is why the Party must be open to the scrutiny and criticism of the masses, transparent in its relations with them and willing to rectify its errors, humbly and honestly demonstrating that were are servants of the people. As Cabral said; "Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes or failures. Claim no easy victories."[9]

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[5] Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, "On the Roles and Characteristics of the Panther Vanguard Party and Mass Organizations," *Right On!* Vol. #8, (summer 2008), also reprinted in *Defying the Tomb, Selected Prison Writings of Kevin "Rashid" Johnson Featuring Exchanges With an Outlaw* (Montreal, QE, Kersplebedeb, 2010)

[9] Amicar Cabral, *Directives of PAIGC* (1965) published in Basil Davidson, *The Liberation of Guinea: Aspects of an African Revolution* (Baltimore, Penguin, 1969)

Conclusion

Hopefully, this will give Party comrades and supporters a clearer picture of the importance of cadre training and development and the kind of leadership we need to develop. We are serious about revolution, and we see a revolutionary situation developing in the period ahead of us. This is a time of preparation, a time of laying a strong foundation. If you have what it takes, join us!

Dare to Struggle! Dare to Win!

All Power to the People!



Cabral, Amilcar (1924-1973)

– Demand from responsible Party members that they dedicate themselves seriously to study, that they interest themselves in the things and problems of our daily life and struggle in their fundamental and essential aspect, and not simply in their appearance. Learn from life, learn from our people, learn from books, learn from the experience of others. Never stop learning.

– Responsible members must take life seriously, conscious of their responsibilities, thoughtful about carrying them out, and with a comradeship based on work and duty done. Nothing of this is incompatible with the joy of life, or with love for life and its amusements, or with confidence in the future and in our work.

– The Politics of Struggle

Book Review:

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson's "Defying the Tomb"

The Workers Dreadnought: For International Socialism

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson's *Defying the Tomb* is an excellent example about the prescient and thought-provoking analysis that is being produced by a new generation of organic intellectuals that are being bred in the nascent 'schools of liberation' that are the American prison-industrial complex. The first section of the book largely consists of biographies of Rashid and Outlaw; the second section, and the largest section of the book, is a series of letters that cover a wide gambit of issues that plague New Afrikans and the revolutionary movement alike. The issues covered are dizzying, the array of source materials that Rashid and Outlaw rely on is both broad and deep especially considering the conditions under which they are read and commented upon, and the synthesis of theory and praxis that they have produced together is refreshing. And finally in the third section we see key essays penned by Rashid that serve as the cornerstone of the theoretical edifice of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter, and demonstrate a different and more mature Comrade Rashid. The book is replete with images and drawings by the author himself and they often serve as pictorial essays. They seek to not only represent the conditions of national oppression that the New Afrikan peoples experience in the contemporary USA, but also identify a revolutionary subject that is attempting to break free.

Comrade Rashid is the Minister of Defense of the NABPP-PC and this book is a rare document as it documents the intellectual and political development of two revolutionaries, not one, inside the 'razor wire plantations.' Indeed, this book serves as a useful demonstration of Chairman Mao's 'mass line' in which through a process of 'unity-struggle-transformation,' we see the transformation of both Outlaw and Rashid. Even though Outlaw is the younger comrade in this exchange of letters, Rashid does not simply didactically preach but rather he learns as well. Rashid takes Outlaw's ideas in their raw form and gives them back in a more concrete sense, whilst changing his own ideas because of new insights and interventions by the very capable Outlaw. Outlaw and Rashid are both teacher and student alike, and demonstrate a passion, care and ingenuity that can do nothing but gladden the heart of a now cynical Left and serve as an inspiration. This is most powerfully borne out by the fact that at the end of this book we see the rise of the NABPP-PC. This openness to new ideas and arguments is demonstrated in the very opening pages of the book when in the thoughtful forward Comrade Russell "Maroon" Shoats openly states his disagreements with Comrade Rashid's emphasis on a more conventional form of democratic centralism. Such honesty and humility is something that is all too rare in our contemporary Left.

There are numerous theoretical quibbles that one can have with the theoretical propositions that Comrade Rashid enunciates; I definitely have many, especially the

adoption of a revolutionary humanism and the replacement of 'Pantherism' with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. However, to enunciate them now seems to be simply characteristic of an academic exercise and this book definitely is not intended to be such an exercise. Rather, the book serves as a revolutionary primer for anyone organizing in the ghettoes, 'razor wire plantations', schools, and workplaces in North America to build a revolutionary movement and a revolutionary party. An interesting aspect of Comrade Rashid's theory is his revival of the role of the urban guerrilla in his work and, like many other comrades around the world, emphasizes the need for an armed section of the movement that can in fact protect the mass movement. Unfortunately, and as this is not an academic quibble but rather a tactical difference between us, Comrade Rashid does not theoretically develop the role of the armed movement in the capture of state power besides the limited self-defense role that was adopted by the BPP. Nevertheless, this book is an amazing example of a jailhouse philosopher trying to not only interpret the world, but from solitary confinement to actually change it. Furthermore, this book serves as a continuation to a dialogue that seems to have largely stopped, although some circles and communities remain, with the collapse of the underground revolutionary left in the 1980's, and the paralysis, as Rashid points out, of those comrades who were part of that initial wave of the revolutionary movement. Thus, it synthesizes the lessons of the Black Panther Party and the BLA, especially through a critical re-evaluation of the works of Comrade George Jackson (in fact after reading *Defying the Tomb* I immediately contacted a close comrade and suggested that we re-read *Blood In My Eye* and Comrade Huey P. Newton's theory of intercommunalism, with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to produce an original new revolutionary course for the U.S. revolutionary movement, which he has termed, "Pantherism." A project that many have taken up but never have completed. *Defying the Tomb* Serves as a useful step in that right direction, especially as it actively engages with other political and religious tendencies that currently exist in the revolutionary movement.

Defying the Tomb is a valuable addition to the subterranean, yet active, tradition of New Afrikan communist theory, which includes the works of James Yaki Sayles, J. Saka, Butch Lee, and Bottomfish Blues. I am sure that all of these different authors would have theoretical differences with one another, but this is why this is such a dynamic and interesting movement. And one hopes that other books by Comrade Rashid and other members of the NABPP-PC are indeed forthcoming in the coming years as Comrade Tom Big Warrior suggests. Also, it is incumbent on all of us that call ourselves the Left to read these books. For far too long the Left has occupied itself by bemoaning the lack of contemporary organic intellectuals when such a tradition already exists under our very noses! It serves as a powerful reminder to those who have the privilege to not be incarcerated of our responsibilities to those comrades that continue to struggle under those conditions and to the people who we seek to serve. [end]



From Bad to Worse: Transferred from Red Onion to Wallen's Ridge State Prison

By Kevin 'Rashid' Johnson

On January 20, 2012, I was transferred from Red Onion to Wallen's Ridge State Prison. This transfer came on the heels of a December 12, 2011 incident where a large portion of my hair was ripped out by a Red Onion guard, a staged instigation by a Virginia Dept. of Corrections Internal Affairs agent Johnny Acosta, and my having sent out an article and report on it all. Obviously, no coincidence.

From one set-up to another

On the morning of January 20, I was confronted at my cell by Red Onion's C-Building unit manager, Michael Younce, and Lieutenant Delmer Tate, who both lied, telling me that agent Johnny Acosta wanted to speak with me in the prison's video-court area. I was, upon being handcuffed and leg shackled, 'escorted' by them to the prison's transport area and put into a cell, and told to strip down to be searched by security chief Kevin McCoy because I was "taking a trip." Numerous guards entered the area including one Joseph Ely, a prior Red Onion guard who'd transferred to Wallen's Ridge to be promoted to a lieutenant. Ely was carrying transportation restraints and a 50,000 volt electric stun belt, which prisoners are made to wear when taken on road trips. I instantly realized I was being transferred to Wallen's Ridge. I asked McCoy several times about my property. He assured it'd be right behind me. It wasn't. It was all left at Red Onion, where much of it will likely be destroyed, 'lost' and taken.

McCoy attempted to provoke a situation by having me given a pair of pants to wear that were too small. I refused to wear them. After a standoff, I was given a pair in the correct size, restrained, belled and taken to a transport van. Inside the van, I was crushed and locked inside a tiny steel cage measuring about 5 feet high and 2 by 2 feet square, in which I could barely move. Once on the road, Ely asked if I knew where I was going. I answered "obviously to Wallen's Ridge." Hethen asked did I really not know I was being transferred? I told him no, that I was told I was going to see someone. He added, "You know why you're going back, don't you?" "Not really," I answered. He then stated, "Well, you know a lot of people don't like you. You probably won't leave walking." I was to receive numerous similar threats by guards that I was being sent to Wallen's Ridge to be set up for violence.

Upon reaching Wallen's Ridge, I was met by numerous guards, especially ranking guards, whom I'd known from my

2000-2003 confinement at Wallen's Ridge. All displayed openly hostile attitudes. One of the guards, who was holding one of my arms and 'escorting' me from the van to the intake area, Dixon, repeatedly dug his fingers into my right arm. I was also accompanied during this walk by two large dogs barking loudly and straining wildly against their leashes. I went through the strip search and endured another standoff over too-small clothes, by Sergeant Cochrane and Lieutenant Swiney, both obviously trying to provoke a situation to 'justify' using violence. So I retested and wore the clothes for the brief walk to the unit. I was leg-shackled, cuffed from behind and 'escorted' by a mob of guards to the O-3 housing unit. Every cell in the unit was empty. I was put into O-301, one of only two cells in the block with a steel box approximately 8" x 12" x 18" with a Plexiglas cover, welded to the outside of a cell door and around the opening in the door through which food and other items are passed and handcuffs applied and removed. I was made to kneel to have the leg shackles removed, and to put my hands outside the slot into the box where the handcuffs were removed. I then removed my hands from the box and a steel plate was slid in place across the door opening, closing off access to the box. Cohcrane and Swiney came to the door in turns, repeating the same threats Ely had made, adding that "this time there won't be any witnesses," indirectly referring to my placement in a completely empty unit. Major Combs then came to the cell asking if I'd changed, commenting that I'd gotten grey hair since last he'd seen me and was 'getting old.'

Every guard I've encountered from then to now has been invariably hostile, and verbally insulting. I've been called a "nigger" no less than 15 times and subjected to numerous homosexual taunts in efforts to provoke and enrage me, which I pay no mind to. One guard, R. Ricketts has gone out of his way to repeatedly verbally taunt and threaten me with abuses to come. I've had my meals and beverages dropped into the visibly filthy box on the door which is never cleaned, indeed it can't be where it contains rust, peeling paint, fermented food and beverages residue, and one must place dirty clothes, shoes, toilet cleaning items, etc. into the box to be searched by or exchanged with guards. Using the box for meal service is a per se health hazard. Not only is my food contaminated by being placed into direct contact with the box's surfaces, but I've found paint particles, dirt, lint, etc. in my food and beverages from the box.

I was also brought clothes by Swiney that had been sprayed with mace or gas. I've been kept incommunicado – denied phone use, all property, and kept in a completely empty unit. I've also received two trays with foods containing broken pieces of metal and rocks. Guards, including Cochrane, refuse to provide me with, or to accept for filing, forms needed to pursue emergency and other grievances and complaints. I had to go through a Lieutenant Bergan to obtain complaint forms from Cochrane, who then gave me only two out of five requested by me. As indicated in my last report/update, the December 12, 2011 assault where my hair was ripped out was preceded by threats by the assaulting guard, in that I'm now being faced with a consistent series of threats by a staff known to abuse and even kill prisoners – which I'll elaborate on below – it is important that this situation be made known as broadly as possible. I believe outside exposure, support and pressure has kept many of the more seriously violent official intentions at bay. These threats, under the circumstances, must be taken very seriously.

Wallen's Ridge: A Nest of Vipers

Several of the threats here have been accompanied by guards making disparaging remarks about me being a "protester," "Black Panther," etc., often accompanied by racial slurs. It is well known that Black prisoners known to challenge or protest abuses or who are politically active are abuse targets at Wallen's Ridge. John Gaskins, aka Mac, who was recently released from Wallen's Ridge, has been both witness and victim. While at the prison, he witnessed prisoners inclined to protest being set up by guards, beaten and thrown into segregation. He was himself, for this reason, set up on a false infraction and thrown in segregation until he was released from Virginia's prisons. He expected to be beaten by the guards himself at any time.

Frank Reid, aka Outlaw, the prisoner with whom I engaged in written political exchanges in my book, *Defying the Tomb*, was also brutally beaten and hospitalized at Wallen's Ridge a couple years ago. In my prior update/article, I discussed a 2001 beating by 3 ranking Wallen's Ridge guards of a Black prisoner, last name Plummer, which resulted in the guards being prosecuted. The charges were circumvented by the entire prison's staff coming together to stage a scene at the prison to sway the jury to acquit the guards, and the investigator – Johnny Acosta – who found the guards to have assaulted Plummer, was in turn sued by them. Many of the guards involved in that cover-up still work at Wallen's Ridge, including Major Combs, Cochrane, Swiney, etc. Prisoners have also been killed by Wallen's Ridge officials or at their prompting. Most recent was the controversial killing of Harvey Lee Watson by his cellmate Robert Gleason, who pled guilty to the killing and implicated Wallen's Ridge staff as complicit and responsible. Several were fired after-the-fact, when autopsies found Watson had been dead for half a day when discovered by guards inside the cell. The guards had falsified records claiming they'd been making routine checks of the prisoners. However, those who caused his death were passed over. Gleason personally told me numerous times that he only realized after killing Watson that Wallen's Ridge officials had used him, set him up to kill Watson to remove a thorn from their side. He vowed to plead guilty to the killing and to use the case to expose what they'd done, which he did, to no avail.

In that case, they wanted to silence Watson, who kept protesting that officials had knowingly transported him from Sussex One State Prison in Waverly, Virginia to Wallen's Ridge with a dead prisoner sitting with him in the van. Watson had also just set his cell on fire the night before being transferred and had recently set another prisoner on fire. He had outstanding punitive segregation sentences to serve and was not supposed to have been released to population. He also was supposed at all times to have been housed in cells alone, even in population, due to mental health status. However, ranking Wallen's Ridge officials and the counselor, wife of Lieutenant A. Gallihar, conspired to put Watson in Gleason's cell in population.

Gleason was known to have been convicted, suspected, and charged with numerous killings. Officials felt he was their man

for the job. In the cell, Gleason complained to Staff Counsellor Gallihar, ranking officials, the warden, even people on the outside that Watson was sick and needed to be moved out of his cell before he was forced into a drastic reaction. Watson would drink urine, masturbate in the open, talk loudly to himself all times of night, etc. Lieutenant Gallihar, his wife and others told Gleason, "You know how to deal with it," refusing to move Watson. Gleason admittedly snapped and killed Watson. The scandal has been widely reported in the media and Gleason is open about what happened and why. The day after the killing, A. Gallihar, who wasn't at the prison the day of the killing, fabricated an incident report as though he was, on his wife's behalf to cover for her.

During or about 2003, a white Connecticut prisoner was strangled to death by Wallen's Ridge guards who claimed the death a suicide hanging. A similar attack was attempted against another white prisoner, Michael Austin, now confined at Red Onion, during or about 2010. The guards disliked Austin because he'd grown up around and embraced Black urban culture and clashed with the prison's rural white guards who'd ridicule him and try to influence him with racist values. In his case, guards premeditatedly rushed into his cell, claiming falsely he was attempting to hang himself, put a thick string around his neck and began choking him. Their designs to strangle him to death were foiled only because the string broke. During 2003, another Connecticut prisoner, a Black man named Lawrence Frazier, was electrocuted to death by numerous Wallen's Ridge guards while he was restrained to a steel bed frame by his extremities. The death was dismissed as caused by insulin shock, however an examining doctor found the electrocutions contributed to, if not caused, his death. A documentary "Up the Ridge," was filmed by a local radio group exposing the racism and abuses surrounding the prison and reporting on Frazier's killing.

During 2001, I was myself the victim of a brutal assault by a mob of Wallen's Ridge guards, including two who beat Plummer just months later. In my case, I was drawn out of my segregation cell while fully unrestrained by a guard G. Sexton, inviting me to an off -the record one-on-one fight (what we call "a fair one" in prison). His intentions, however, weren't to fight but to set me up for a mob attack. Sexton never once put up a fight, but was knocked down almost immediately and began screaming for back-up. I was subdued without resisting and upon being handcuffed and shackled was repeatedly kicked in the face and head, electrocuted with multiple 50,000 volt stun weapons, had all but 3 of my then almost 2-foot-long dreadlocks systematically ripped out, and was left with multiple facial lacerations that had to be stitched closed, burns across my upper body and arms, and blood red and purple contusions covering the entire whites of my eyes across their front halves. The attack was covered up by Wallen's Ridge officials at all levels and Internal Affairs agents who destroyed pod surveillance camera footage of the attack, moved all vocal prisoner witnesses to other units, and colluded reports claiming all my injuries were inflicted by Sexton defending himself against an unanticipated attack by me when the cell 'accidentally' opened. At first they'd claimed I opened it, whereas Sexton himself told guards in the control booth to open it.

What's more, Wallen's Ride's present warden, Gregory Halloway, has subjected me to extensive past torture while a unit manager at Greensville Correctional Center, during 1998. At that time he kept me on an illegal status called "white cell status," when I was left for 8 months, even during winter, with nothing inside the cell, but one pair of boxer shorts. No property was permitted. I could not even brush my teeth and ended up having to have several filled for cavities as a result. I was only allowed a mattress and bedding from 10 pm through 6 am. I contracted the flu, sinus infections and colds. Throughout the white cell confinement, my cell window to the outside was broken, letting in freezing and cold outside temperatures. While on white cell status, Holloway accused me of knocking him unconscious in the medical department while my blood pressure taken with my hands cuffed, supposedly in response to his torturing me. I remained on white cell status until I was transferred to Red Onion in 1998 from Greensville. Therefore not only is Holloway an official who's known to illegally torture and abuse – and will admit having me on that illegal status – but one who has cause for vengeance against me. It is highly unlikely I can expect to receive any semblance of just treatment under him, nor that he would act to prevent threatened abuses. Indeed, it is probable that he is privy to such abuses.

Furthermore, Holloway is but a token Black figurehead, recently appointed to Wallen's Ridge to counter a widespread image and reputation for racism, like Red Onion. Similarly, at Red Onion, a token Black warden was appointed in the early 2000s, under whose supervision racism and abuse escalated. Indeed, he went out of his way to avoid making waves with the local entrenched white supremacist status quo that de facto ran Red Onion, as it does Wallen's Ridge. Dark faces in high places is today's chief tactic for masking institutionalized racism.

Conclusion

If officials did not send me to Wallen's Ridge with deviant designs, then this admits I qualify to be housed at any other VDOC prison of the same level 5 security classification, such as Sussex One or Two State Prisons, where a more racially diverse and tolerant staff exists. At Wallen's Ride and Red Onion, I and other politically active prisoners and those who challenge abuses have been targeted in a clear pattern with official violence and abuse.

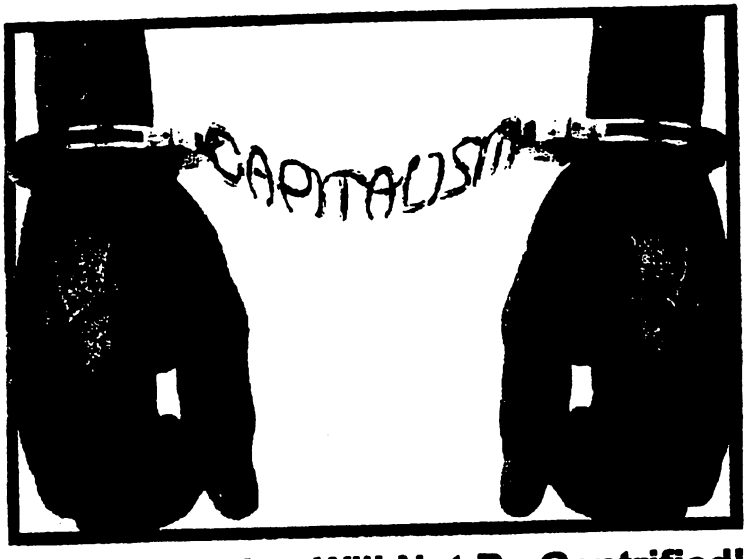
It's my request to supporters and readers to raise as much protest and awareness about this situation as possible and press for my reassignment to a less volatile and more racially diverse and tolerant environment, such as the Sussex prisons. And to also be aware of the foul conditions that we live under on these razor wire plantations. For me, it just went from bad to worse.

Dare to struggle! Dare to win!

All Power to the People!

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson #1007485
Wallen's Ridge State Prison
P.O. Box 759
Big Stone Gap, VA 24219


OCCUPY THE
HOOD
At the Bottom of the 99% We got Nothing... but chains to lose
RASHID '11
BLACK CAPITALIST
MONOPOLY CAPITALIST 1%
We have to understand very clearly that there's a man in our community called a capitalist. Sometimes he's Black and sometimes he's white. But that man has to be driven out of our community; because anybody who comes into the community to make profit off the people by exploiting them can be defined as a capitalist.
- Fred Hampton, Sr.
www.rashidmed.com



The Revolution Will Not Be Gentrified!

"OWS protest campaigners must realize the long-term fight ahead if they sincerely seek to challenge and change America. America's plutocratic and military leaders have absolutely no intentions of relinquishing power, authority or wealth as a result of these protests. The task ahead is formidable, but a New American Revolution is possible; it is needed and necessary not only for poor and oppressed peoples in the United States, but for the billions of poor and oppressed peoples around the world."

– Jalil Muntaqim, BPP/BLA Political Prisoner/POW

By Tom Big Warrior

The revolution did not begin two months ago, nor is it about wresting a few concessions from the monopoly-capitalist ruling class. Revolution is about the overthrow of one class by another -by any means necessary -it is about changing the basis on which society is organized. In this epoch it is about ending capitalist exploitation and empowering the people to create a new social order based upon social justice and equality for all.

The Occupy Wall Street movement has spread across this country and the world like a prairie fire because the conditions cry out for radical change, but the initiators of this movement have a very limited conception of what change is necessary, one that reflects their white middle class position in this racist, exploitative society. As much as they want to be "revolutionary," they insist upon placing ideological-political handcuffs on the movement that make real revolution impossible.

Limiting the struggle to the primary concerns of the white middle class takes the ideological-political form of defending capitalism and basing society on class exploitation and merely criticizing Wall Street for its reckless greed and shortsightedness. The "non-leaders" of the OWS movement make it clear that they are not socialist in any way while pimping off the aspirations of the masses for real social justice and real radical transformation of society. They talk of taking money out of politics as if the government was not itself an instrument of class dictatorship, as if all states in history have not been the organized expression of the dictatorship of the owners of the primary means of production of that time. Money rules in a capitalist society. Democracy is an illusion, and if you want to change that you have to commit yourself to overthrowing capitalism.

"A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another." — Mao Tse-tung

Blacks, other People of Color and poor whites have been suffering under the yoke of capitalist oppression a long time. Amerika was founded upon genocide, slavery and robbing the poor, and this is the essence of capitalist society. You can't separate money from politics except by revolution led by the oppressed and exploited themselves. You might as well try to separate the stink from a skunk.

You can't separate racism from capitalism either. Racism was born to justify slavery resurrected as the primary means of primitive capital accumulation of rising capitalism. Racist ideas and the ideology of white supremacy were essential to capitalism's overthrow of European feudal society and to maintaining the inequality of contemporary capitalist-imperialism domestically and globally. The naked colonialism of the 16th-20th centuries has been replaced by the neo-colonialism of capitalist neo-liberalism and putting some Black and Brown faces in high places, but a truer reflection of reality is seen in the preponderance of Black and Brown faces in Amerika's prisons and unemployment lines.

Black and Brown are not generally reflected in the OWS movement. This reflects how the masses of really oppressed people are viewing the movement and its claim to represent the 99%. OWS has broad public approval, and the majority sincerely opposes the crushing of the movement by police repression, but it is not inspiring the masses of oppressed to join it nor the majority of OWS participants to question why this is. The haters, rallying to the baiting of FOX News and other mouthpieces for the super-rich, yell "Get a job!" as they drive by as if the mass unemployment was caused by the people protesting it. Might as well drive by the hospital and yell, "Get healthy!"

Capitalism isn't about to "get healthy" because it is dying from its own internal contradictions and it has created its own gravediggers. The concentration of wealth is part of the generalization of poverty that marks this stage of the evolution of the capitalist system. Revolutions in agriculture, industry and technology call forth a revolution in the superstructure of society. We now possess the means and ability to provide a decent standard of living for all of humanity, but the monopoly capitalists cannot profitably exploit more than a shrinking minority of the 6.5 billion people who share this planet.

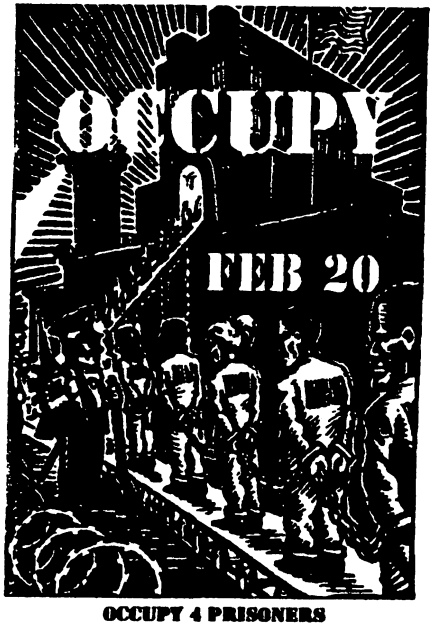
In the U.S., the bottom 40% possess just 0.2% of its wealth, while globally the bottom half of the population own just 1% of the worlds wealth. Half the people in the world are struggling to live on less than $5 a day. In contrast, the richest 1% own more than 40% of the world's wealth and the top 10% own 85% of the world's wealth (as of 2000). To the poor of this country and the rest of the world, the rich and the super-rich are a pack of ravenous vampires sucking their life-blood and that of society as a whole.

Middle class illusions about reforming vampires and admonishing them for their greed are ridiculous. Pacifist prescriptions for vampire control are doomed to failure, but of course it is the agents of the bloodsuckers who spread such ridiculous ideas. "Invite me in," the vampire says, "and we'll chat over lunch." The bloodsuckers ask, "What is your program?" And tell us to enter their "democratic process."

The Revolutionary Road is not the same as dead-end reformism. That well-traveled path is littered with the wrecks of well-intentioned movements and campaigns that in the end become part of the blood-sucking system. Our path must be to the people – the most oppressed and forsaken – to unite them and build community-based people's power as part of a worldwide united front against capitalist imperialism.

Dare to Struggle Dare to Win!

All Power to the People!



OCCUPY 4 PRISONERS
NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION
FEB. 20TH AT NOON

MASS DEMONSTRATION AT SAN QUENTIN PRISON

STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE CONFINED WITHIN ITS WALLS

DEMAND THE END TO MASS INCARCERATION

OCCUPY 4 PRISONERS

NATIONAL OCCUPY DAY IN SUPPORT OF PRISONERS–2.20.12

PROPOSAL TO OCCUPY OAKLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

This proposal that was passed at the Occupy Oakland General Assembly, on Monday, January 9th, 2012.

PROPOSAL

Summary

We are calling for February 20th, 2012 to be a "National Occupy Day in Support of Prisoners."

In the Bay Area we will "Occupy San Quentin," to stand in solidarity with the people confined within its walls and to demand the end of the incarceration as a means of containing those dispossessed by unjust social policies.

Prisons have become a central institution in American society, integral to our politics, economy and our culture.

Between 1978 and 2000, the United States built on average a new prison each week and the number of imprisoned Americans increased tenfold.

Prison has made the threat of torture part of everyday life for millions of individuals in the United States, especially the 7.3 million people – who are disproportionately people of color - - currently incarcerated or under correctional supervision.

Imprisonment itself is a form of torture. The typical American prison, juvenile hall and detainment camp is designed to maximize degradation, brutalization, and dehumanization.

Mass incarceration is the new Jim Crow. Between 1970 and 1995, the incarceration of African Americans increased 7 times. Currently African Americans make up 12% of the population in the U.S. but 53% of the nation's prison population. There are more African Americans under correctional control today – in prison or jail, on probation or parole – than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War began.

The prison system is the most visible example of policies of punitive containment of the most marginalized and oppressed in our society. Prior to incarceration, 2/3 of all prisoners lived in conditions of economic hardship. While the perpetrators of white-collar crime largely go free.

In addition, the Center for Economic and Policy Research estimated that in 2008 alone there was a loss in economic input associated with people released from prison equal to $57 billion to $65 billion.

We call on Occupies across the country to support:

1. Abolishing unjust sentences, such as the Death Penalty, Life Without the Possibility of Parole, Three Strikes, Juvenile Life Without Parole, and the practice of trying children as adults.

2. Standing in solidarity with movements initiated by prisoners and taking action to support prisoner demands, including the Georgia Prison Strike and the Pelican Bay/California Prisoners Hunger Strikes.

3. Freeing political prisoners, such as Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Lynne Stewart, Bradley Manning and Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald, a Black Panther Party member incarcerated since 1969.

4. Demanding an end to the repression of activists, specifically the targeting of African Americans and those with histories of incarceration, such as Khali in Occupy Oakland who could now face a life sentence, on trumped-up charges, and many others being falsely charged after only exercising their First Amendment rights.

5. Demanding an end to the brutality of the current system, including the torture of those who have lived for many years in Secured Housing Units (SHUs) or in solitary confinement.

6. Demanding that our tax money spent on isolation, harming and killing prisoners, instead be invested in improving the quality of life for all and be spent on education, housing, health care, mental health care and other human services which contribute to the public good.

Bay Area

On February 20th, 2012 we will organize in front of San Quentin, where male death-row prisoners are housed, where Stanley Tookie Williams was immorally executed by the State of California in 2005, and where Kevin Cooper, an innocent man on death row, is currently imprisoned.

At this demonstration, through prisoners' writings and other artistic and political expressions, we will express the voices of the people who have been inside the walls. The organizers of this action will reach out to the community for support and participation. We will contact social service organizations, faith institutions, Labor organizations, schools, prisoners, former prisoners and their family members.

National and International Outreach

We will reach out to Occupies across the country to have similar demonstrations outside of prisons, jails, juvenile halls and detainment facilities or other actions as such groups deem appropriate. We will also reach out to Occupies outside of the United States and will seek to attract international attention and support.

We have chosen Monday, February 20, 2012 at San Quentin, because it is a non-weekend day. Presidents' Day avoids the weekend conflict with prisoners' visitation, which would likely be shut down if we held a demonstration over the weekend.



Occupy, Community Support Helps win Release of Gen. T.A.C.O. of Black Riders

From: *Turning The Tide: Special Occupy Wall Street Issue*, Dec. 2011

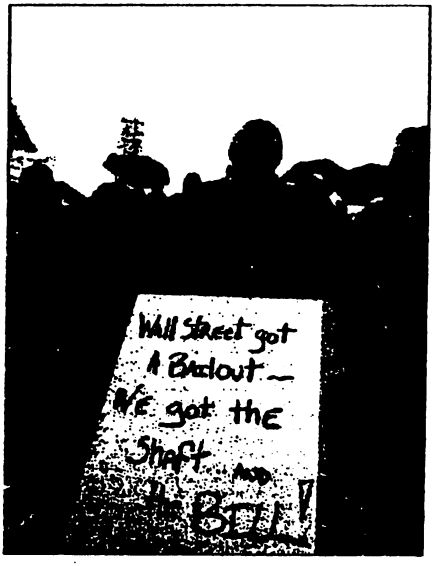
Similar to what occurred during the Los Angeles trial of Officer Mehserle for the murder of Oscar Grant, the state attempted to lock up General T.A.C.O. (Taking All Capitalists Out) of the Black Riders Liberation Party, a new-generation Black Panther Party for Self Defense formation, in the period of time during which the prison hunger strikers began a second strike and Occupy LA launched. He was picked up on the streets of the Crenshaw district along with BRLP Chief of Staff Sister LasLas (who is also youth coordinator of the Jericho Amnesty Movement to free all political prisoners). LasLas was released, but parole authorities held T.A.C.O. for the "crime" of political association and expression, allegedly preventing his parole conditions from the Black Rider 3 case, even though during that case, the judge threw out a prosecution effort to get gang enhancement charges placed on T.A.C.O., rejecting the state's allegation that the Riders are a gang.

Once again, the state miscalculated, as strong support was built for T.A.C.O. by Occupy the Hood and Anti-Racist Action, among other groupings. The Occupy LA General Assembly passed a resolution calling for his release, and delegations were sent from the Occupation to two separate parole hearings held nearby at on Bauchet St. across from the Twin Towers. Although the state kept moving T.A.C.O. to different jails within the county system (the largest jail system in the world), this did not deter supporters from keeping in touch and only served to allow T.A.C.O. to connect with and voice the discontents of the masses of Black and Brown locked down in the jails. This occurred amid embarrassing disclosures of unchecked violence by deputies in the jails, including incidents corroborated by the FBI smuggling a cell phone to a confidential informant prisoner assisting the feds in probing the deputies.

The BRLP, with support from Occupy LA, Grassroots KPFK, and others, were able to obtain independent private council for T.A.C.O. at his parole hearing, along with strong community support inside and out. This resulted in T.A.C.O.'s release back to "minimum security" on the streets, though still with a 21st Century slave shackle GPS tracking devise on his ankle, constant harassment by cops and PO's and new severe restrictions on his housing and association with other Black Riders, which has resulted in dispersal of one of their housing communes and made additional expenses necessary. But the release was a clear victory for the people over the state, which had intended to send him to state prison for a year. This came despite the personal intervention of LAPD Chief Charlie Beck, who wrote a letter to the head of the state parole department in Sacramento, libeling T.A.C.O. as planning to kill cops. This only serves to underscore the seriousness with which the LAPD and other repressive agencies take the BRLP. Call them to offer your support at (323) 289-4457. There is an ongoing need for material aid and solidarity. [end]

Call out to people of color

by Occupy Wall Street People of Color Working Group



Black and Brown Oaklanders, though not the majority, were a major presence on the first day of Occupy Oakland, despite the rain - Photo: David Bacon

To those who want to support the occupation of Wall Street, who want to struggle for a more just and equitable society, but who feel excluded from the campaign, this is a message for you.

To those who do not feel as though their voices are being heard, who have felt unable or uncomfortable participating in the campaign, or who feel as though they have been silenced, this is a message for you.

To those who haven't thought about #OccupyWallStreet but know that radical social change is needed, and to those who have thought about joining the protest but do not know where or how to begin, this is a message for you.

You are not alone. The individuals who make up the People of Color Working Group have come together because we share precisely these feelings and believe that the opportunity for consciousness-raising presented by #OccupyWallStreet is one that cannot be missed. It is time to push for the expansion and diversification of #OccupyWallStreet. If this is truly to be a movement of the 99 percent, it will need the rest of the city and the rest of the country.

Let's be real. The economic crisis did not begin with the collapse of the Lehman Brothers in 2008. Indeed, people of color and poor people have been in a state of crisis since the founding of this country and, for indigenous communities, since before the founding of the nation. We have long known that capitalism serves only the interests of a tiny, mostly white, minority.

Black and Brown folks have long known that whenever economic troubles "necessitate" austerity measures and the people are asked to tighten their belts, we are the first to lose our jobs, our children's schools are the first to lose funding, and our bodies are the first to be brutalized and caged. Only we can speak this truth to power. We must not miss the chance to put the needs of people of color -upon whose backs this country was built -at the forefront of this struggle.

Black and Brown folks have long known that whenever economic troubles "necessitate" austerity measures and the people are asked to tighten their belts, we are the first to lose our jobs, our children's schools are the first to lose funding, and our bodies are the first to be brutalized and caged.

Only we can speak this truth to power.

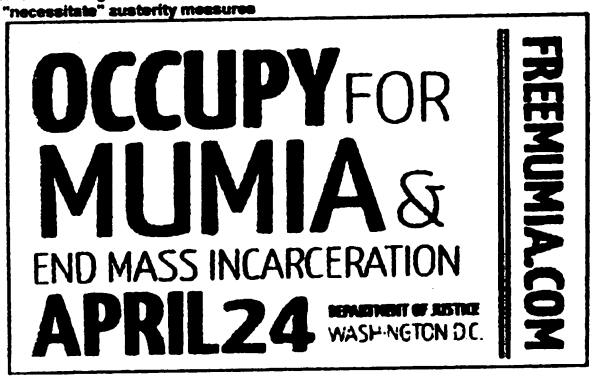
The People of Color Working Group was formed to build a racially conscious and inclusive movement. We are reaching out to communities of color, including immigrant, undocumented and low-wage workers, prisoners, LGTBQ people of color, marginalized religious communities such as Muslims, and indigenous peoples, for whom this occupation ironically comes on top of another one and therefore must be decolonized.

We know that many individuals have responsibilities that do not allow them to participate in the occupation and that the heavy police presence at Liberty Park undoubtedly deters many. We know because we are some of these individuals. But this movement is not confined to Liberty Park: With your help, the movement will be made accessible to all.

If it is not made so, it will not succeed. By ignoring the dynamics of power and privilege, this monumental social movement risks replicating the very structures of injustice it seeks to eliminate. And so we are actively working to unite the diverse voices of all communities in order to understand exactly what is at stake, and to demand that a movement to end economic injustice must have at its core an honest struggle to end racism.

The People of Color Working Group is not meant to divide but to unite all peoples. Our hope is that we, the 99 percent, can move forward together, with a critical understanding of how the greed, corruption and inequality inherent to capitalism threatens the lives of all peoples and the Earth.

The People of Color working group was launched on Oct. 1, 2011. We can be reached by email at unified.ows@gmail.com. We can also be found online at occoccupywallstreet.tumblr. com. We meet Sundays at 3 p.m. and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. under the large red structure in Liberty Square.



OCCUPY THE HOOD

in solidarity with Occupy Wall St.

Our MISSION is to encourage People of Color and community based organizations to be involved in the international "Occupy Wall St. Protests" against big bank bail outs and corporate greed. We need to be present at General Assemblies, sit-ins, marches and rallies, when and where needed. We must also initiate our own protests and boycotts. We will be seen and heard on our own, along-with and in unison with all the occupy-the-world movements until we bring forth a viable solution.... no matter how long it takes.

Because...

- ☑ We are The Least Represented
- ☑ We are Among The Ignored
- ☑ We are Among The Unemployed
- ☑ We are Considered The Under Educated
- ☑ We are Considered The Minority
- ☑ We are The Consumers
- ☑ But most importantly ...Because... Power BELONGS to the PEOPLE and **WE ARE THE PEOPLE!**

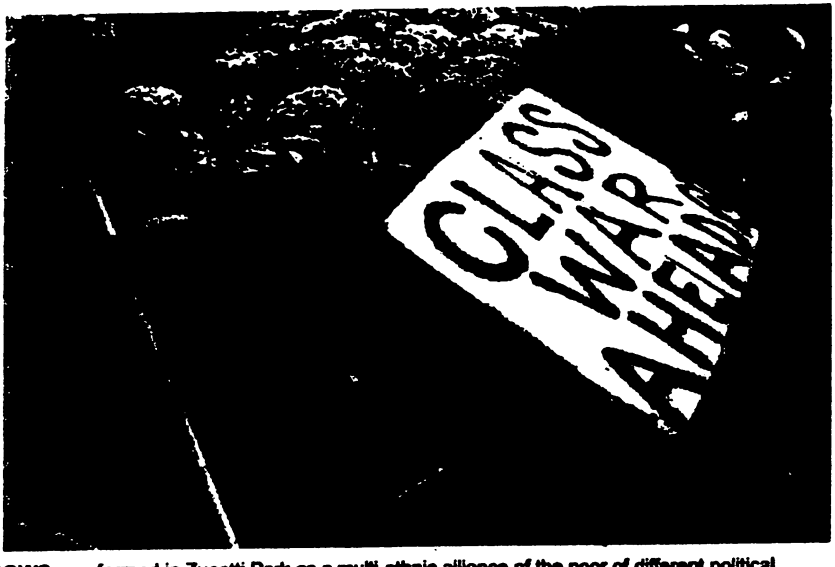
For more info on ***Occupy The Hood or Occupy Detroit*** please contact us **Malik Rhasaan & Ife Johari Uhuru** at:

Phone: (646) 580-4186

Email: occupythehood.detroit@gmail.com or occupythehood@gmail.com
Website: www.OfficialOccupyTheHood.com *(coming soon)*
Facebook: www.facebook.com/OccupyTheHoodDetroit or www.facebook.com/OccupyTheHood
Twitter: @OTH_Detroit or @OccupyTheHood

The Declaration of the Confederated Revolutionaries of Occupy Wall Street (C.R.O.W.S.)

by Rise Up on Wednesday, 7 December 2011



CROWS was formed in Zucotti Park as a multi-ethnic alliance of the poor of different political orientations. It is still active and growing. Declaration of CROWS! Occupy Revolutionary Theory! (open for amendment, it may even have to be a 30 point program.)

by **Comrade El** on Sunday, 4 *December 2011*

The 20 point... declaration of the Confederated Revolutionaries of Occupy Wall St. (C.R.O.W.S.)

1. The world is heading towards global revolution because conditions have become intolerable for the majority of the world's people.

2. Within the U.S. the illusion of democracy is falling away to expose the reality of the Wall St. dictatorship.

3. This is a two party fascist dictatorship as ruthless and oppressive as any in history despite the pretense of being a liberal democracy. Nightsticks and gas, in the faces of pacifist demonstrators as well as the constant murder of people of color in the oppressed communities have shown the true "state of the union."

4. As Lenin said, "fascism is capitalism in decline" and as Mussolini pointed out" fascism should more properly be called corporatism because it represents the merger of corporate and state power." That's what we're up against and that's what we must overthrow.

5. The first task of a revolutionary is to identify the enemy, and win the masses to recognize the necessity of revolution

6. The task of C.R.O.W.S. is to represent this necessity within the rapidly expanding Occupy Wall Street movement.

7. This movement must continue to spread to the oppressed communities as well as broadly throughout society, and it must firmly reject co-option into dead end liberal reformism.

8. We must cease to choose between the lesser of two evils, and begin to fight for the greater good.

9. When your vote doesn't count, don't vote. The only politics worth consideration are those that move us towards a situation of dual power i.e. people's power.

10. Agitate, Educate, Organize! for revolution led by those without a stake in the Amerikkkan dream. We don't want college loan reform, we want a new world!

11. To spread the movement into the oppressed communities, we must take a lesson from the Panther movement of the 60s and 70s, and build community-based people's power through serving the people.

12. We must take over the abandoned buildings to house the homeless and stop the evictions as immediate, necessary actions for our survival.

13. We must roll back the rising tide of child malnutrition and feed the children. We must look to their health and socialization as the future of the revolution.

14. We must unite with and organize the mothers and fathers to share daycare and create people's parks and playgrounds out of the vacant lots of the old society.

15. We must unite with and organize food co-ops, health clinics, liberation schools, artists workshops, music venues, and in general, transform the oppressed communities into base areas of cultural social and political revolution in the context of building a worldwide united front against capitalist-imperialism.

16. We must support our sisters and brothers in the prisons and their fight for their human rights and help to transform the slave pens of oppression into schools of liberation.

17. We must unite with gang youth and help them to unite with each other to form a Red Fist Alliance, to end fratricidal violence and fight the enemy state instead.

18. We must unite with the workers in demanding jobs and a living wage, in fighting union busting and in organizing the unorganized, and even more in raising the level of class consciousness and the need to abolish wage slavery.

19. The OWS movement began with the initiative of white middle class activists whose social and class background limits their ability to speak for or even relate to the most oppressed. They cannot be allowed to exclude or marginalize the poor in our ranks, who after all have nothing to sell out to.

20. The U.S. was founded as a racist, colonial settler state based upon genocide, slavery, sexism and class privilege. All this must be opposed, transformed and replaced by true internationalism, equality and social justice for all. Black, Brown, Red, Yellow, and White; the working people must unite to lead in revolutionizing the U.S. and the world! No longer can our movement be bound by nationalism, racism, sexism or classism however muted or subtle! We must make common cause based on programmatic unity and PARTICIPATORY democracy!

C.R.O.W.S.
P O. Box 4362, Allentown, PA 18105



Occupy the Yard

At the instigation of the Confederated Revolutionaries of Occupy Wall Street (C.R.O.W.S.), the General Assembly of Occupy Wall Street (Zucotti Park, NYC) has authorized the formation of a new working group called Occupy the Yard to promote the idea of, and assist prisoners in turning their yard time into General Assemblies of the People to discuss and debate the important issues of the day including ways to create public opinion to:

1. Stop the executions
2. Stop the torture
3. Stop the brutality
4. Stop the institutionalized racism
5. Stop the policy of mass incarceration of the poor
6. Stop the exploitation of prisoners as slave labor
7. Stop building "supermax" prisons and "sensory deprivation" units
8. Stop trying and sentencing children and youth as adults
9. Stop sentencing people to "life without the possibility of parole"
10. Stop the neglect of prisoners' physical and mental health
11. Stop denying basic civil and human rights to prisoners
12. Stop the bribery of legislators by the prison-industrial complex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Nigeria restores fuel subsidy to quell nationwide protests

President Goodluck Jonathan says government will lower oil cost to about $2.75 a gallon after series of strikes paralysee country

The Guardian, Jan. 14, 2012



Nigerians protest against the 1 January removal of the fuel subsidy, which caused prices to spike from $1.70 per gallon to at least $3.50 per gallon. Photograph: Str/EPA

Nigeria's president has announced the government will subsidise fuel prices to immediately reduce the price to about $2.75 (£1.80) a gallon amid a crippling nationwide strike over the removal of the oil subsidy.

President Goodluck Jonathan also claimed provocateurs have hijacked the protests and demonstrations, which have seen tens of thousands march in cities across the country. Jonathan offered no other details on his claim, but his address on the state-run Nigerian Television Authority showed how worried his government had become by the demonstrations.

"It has become clear to government and all well-meaning Nigerians that other interests beyond the implementation of the deregulation policy have hijacked the protest," Jonathan said. "This has prevented an objective assessment and consideration of all the contending issues for which dialogue was initiated by government. These same interests seek to promote discord, anarchy, and insecurity to the detriment of public peace."

Jonathan's speech came after his attempt to negotiate with labour unions failed late on Sunday night to avert the strike entering a sixth day. The president of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Abdulwaheed Omar, said early on Monday morning be bad-ordered workers to stay at home over Jonathan's fears about security, but that might not keep people away from attending mass demonstrations like one in which more than 20,000 people show up in the country's commercial capital of Lagos.

The strike began on 9 January, paralysing the country of more than 160 million people. The root cause remains fuel prices: Jonathan's government abandoned subsidies that kept prices low on 1 January, 2012 causing prices to spike from $1.70 a gallon (45 cents a litre) to at least $3.50 a gallon (94 cents a litre). The costs of food and transportation also largely doubled in a country where most people live on less than $2 a day.

Anger over losing one of the few benefits average Nigerians see from living in an Oil-rich state led to demonstrations across the country and violence that has killed at least 10 people. Red Cross volunteers have treated more than 600 people injured in protests since the strike began, officials said.

Jonathan and other government officials have argued that removing the subsidies, which are estimated to cost $8 billion a year, would allow the government to spend money on badly needed public projects across Nigeria, with its cratered roads, little electricity and a lack of clean drinking water for its inhabitants. However, many remain suspicious of government as military rulers and politicians have plundered government budgets since independence from Britain in 1960.

The strike also could cut into oil production in Nigeria, which produces about 2.4 million barrels of crude a day and remains a top energy supplier to the US. A major oil workers association threatened on Thursday to stop all oil production in Nigeria at midnight on Saturday over the continued impasse in negotiations. However, the Nigeria Labour Congress said the association had held off on the threatened production halt. [end]

Massacre of Blacks in Libya by NATO-Backed Rebels Continues As World Watches

Commentary by Milton Allimadi, Black Star News

United Nations Says – No Comment – On *Ethnic Cleansing* Of *Black Libyans*''

The Wall Street Journal reports today that Black people have been emptied from the City of Tawergha in Libya, their homes razed, and that the words "slaves" and "negroes" are scribbled on their abandoned buildings in the now ghost town by the NATO-backed rebels.

The chilling account of ethnic-cleansing of Black people in Libya, occurring right before our eyes, appears under the headline "Revenge Feeds Instability in Libya."

These are the "liberators" that President Barack Obama, President Nicolas Sarkozy and Prime Minister David Cameron helped install in Libya to replace Maummar al-Quathafi? They all rejected an African Union proposal that would have brought a ceasefire and the warring parties to a table to create a constitution and to hold elections. ..

Meanwhile, the so-called "prime minister" of the "rebels" Mahmoud Jibril, is quoted in *the Journal*, with respect to the fate of the Black citizens of Tawergha, saying: "Regarding Tawergha my own viewpoint is that nobody has the right to

interfere in this matter except the people of Misurata," who are actually the ones doing the cleansing. Surely Jibril knows that he's inciting to further ethnic cleansing.

An earlier *Wall Street Journal* article had reported that the Misurata unit carrying out the deed is called "The Brigade for Purging Slaves, black Skin." So we are witnessing genocide of Black people in Africa again and doing noth1ng. Simply because Washington, London, and Paris happen to support the "rebels" who are committing the targeted killings.

"Now, rebels have been torching homes in the abandoned city 25 miles to the south," of Misurata, reports *the Journal*. The Journal's reporter also witnessed the burning of "more than a dozen homes," and adds, "On the gates of many vandalized homes in the country's only coastal city dominated by dark-skinned people, light-skinned rebels scrawled the words 'slaves' and 'negroes.'"

The White House has yet to issue a single statement condemning this ethnic cleansing of Black people. Hillary Clinton's Department of State remains mute. The leaders of organizations that profess to protect the rights of Black people, such as the NAACP's Ben Jealous and the National Urban League's Marc Morial, have yet to make statements. Surely, someone must read *The Wall Street Journal*.

This is the second article detailing the specific campaign to wipe out Black Libyans that *The Journal* has reported on; the first article was on June 21, 2011.

Other major corporate media, such as *The New York Times*, CNN, and BBC, all of which to varying degrees surrendered pretense at "objectivity" and openly supported the NATO bombardments are now in a bind. They have yet to report major stories on the ethnic cleansing in Misurata and Tawergha. Rather than concede that the side they supported in the civil war is carrying out war crimes they would rather suppress the story.

Welcome to the 21st Century; the Newspeak George Orwell feared.

Had it not been for *The Wall Street Journal* breaking ranks with other corporate media, this genocide might well have been concealed and attributed to a figment of al-Quathafi's imagination.

Even the United Nations was unable to respond today to the ethnic cleansing reports when contacted by *The Black Star News*, and after *The Journal*'s reports were forwarded. A spokesman for Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon was asked whether the targeted actions qualified as ethnic cleansing; whether they qualified as war crimes, and; whether the United Nations is demanding for an investigation.

The spokesman, Eduardo del Buey, ignored the specific questions and responded with a statement from the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, which in part states that "In situations of transition or unrest, restraint must be observed."

Small comfort to the now depleted citizenry of Tawergha.

"We are not commenting on media reports. The High Commissioner speaks to the issue of human rights, and this is what she has said to date in Libya," Eduardo del Buey added.

When contacted for reaction, Brenda Jones, a spokesperson for Congressman John Lewis, stressed that Rep. Lewis, the civil rights hero, as a matter of principle, opposes warfare as solutions for resolving disputes even though there might have been legitimate human rights concerns. "He does not agree with war because of its ramifications, because it leads to these moral compromises," she said. "It puts you in a difficult position, where you have to commit the same crimes that you are intending to stop."

More U.S. elected officials and ordinary Americans of all races should read *The Wall Street Journal's* accounts and weigh in on the reported crimes being committed by the rebels. They are, after all, in power due in part to American support.

The Journal articles also quotes a Misratan rebel leader, Mohammed Ben Ras Ali, saying, "Tawergha is no more."

How many times does the world have to keep saying "never again"?

Editor's Note: Readers are not obliged to stand by and watch the ethnic cleansing of Black people in Libya. Please call *The New York Times* at (212) 556-1234 and ask Foreign editor Joe Kahn why the *Times* hasn't done major stories on the Tawergha and Misurata war crimes. Also pose the same question to *Times* Publisher Sulzberger.

"Speaking Truth To Empower,"

Clashes erupt in Cairo

2012-01-29

Cairo -- Hundreds of Egyptian protesters demanding an immediate end to military rule clashed on Sunday with rivals in civilian clothes outside central Cairo's state media building, the same place where 25 people were killed in a demonstration in October.

"Down with military rule," protesters chanted. The sound of gunshots rang through the air but it was unclear who was firing.

"Tell me council, who chose you? It's Mubarak's gang that appointed you," the crowd chanted, referring to the army council which has ruled Egypt since President Hosni Mubarak was ousted in February 2011.

Dozens of protesters clashed with a group of people protesters described as "thugs" brought out to attack them, hurling stones at each other. There was no sign of police or troops intervening or securing the media building.

"We were protesting here peacefully, and all of a sudden a group of around 50 thugs came from side streets surrounding the building and attacked us with stones and glass bottles, and we responded by throwing stones back at them. They tore down our tents," said Mohamed Abdo, 45, an elevator worker.

State radio said residents in a poor area next to Maspero, the site of the demonstration, had challenged the protesters because they were disrupting shops and businesses in the area.

Protesters often say such "thugs," usually youths in plain clothes and sometimes members of the police force, have been hired by the authorities to disrupt demonstrations.

Frustrated

The October violence at Maspero in which 25 people died erupted when troops tried to break up a protest sparked by what Christians said was an attack on a church in southern Egypt.

Egyptians have become increasingly frustrated by military rule, though many still see the army as a vital force for stability after months of political turmoil.

"The country cannot continue like this. Things are getting worse. They have to transfer power now.

The country cannot stay like this any longer," said Waleed Kamal, 25.

He was not among the protesters, but lives nearby. "If we get civilian rule, the country will get back on its feet, the economic wheel will turn," he added.

Egyptians on January 25 marked the first anniversary of mass demonstrations against Mubarak in Tahrir Square, near the Maspero site of Sunday's protest.

-- Reuters

Report Finds Slow Response to Famine

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Jan. 20, 2012

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) -Thousands of people died needlessly and millions of dollars were wasted because the international community did not respond fast enough to early signs of famine in East Africa, aid agencies said Wednesday.

Most rich donor nations waited until the crisis was in full swing before donating much money, said a report by the aid groups Oxfam and Save the Children. A food shortage had been predicted as early as August 2010, but most donors did not respond until famine was declared in parts of Somalia last July.

The report also said aid agencies were too slow in intensifying their response.

The British government estimates that 50,000 to 100,000 people died from the famine, mostly Somalis.

Now, there are clear signs of an impending hunger crisis in West Africa, said Justin Forsyth, chief executive of Save the Children.

Other countries at risk are Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad, said Alun McDonald, regional spokesman for Oxfam. [end]

Forty arrested at Cape Town Occupy

By Iqra Qalam

31 January 2012
World Socialist Web Site

Forty people were arrested on Friday 28 January as they prepared to launch an Occupy Rondebosch Common demonstration in Cape Town. The three-day "People's Jobs, Land & Housing Summit", organised by community organisations include Passop, Proudly Manenberg, Gugulethu Anti-Eviction Campaign, South African NGO Coalition and the South African Council of Churches, was broken up with brutal police repression.

The mayor of Cape Town, Patricia De Lille, justified the police brutality, declaring in a speech to the City Council: "There are those who would sooner see this city destroyed, driven in two by violence and aggression, than be a part of a shared destiny. I tell this council now, those agents of division will not win."

She said that she would not allow "these agents of destruction to use their misguided, naive and brutal misunderstandings of the politics of race to divide this city."

In the 1960s, Patricia De Lille was a trade union official and rose to the leadership of the Pan African Congress (PAC), a group which had split from the now ruling African National Congress (ANC) in 1959. After leaving the PAC she formed the Independent Democrats (ID) before merging with the right-wing Democratic Alliance.

De Lille unleashed the repression against the peaceful demonstrators for attempting to hold a gathering in Rondebosch Common, which under Apartheid was an area from which non-whites were banned and is today surrounded by wealthy suburbs and golf courses. Her reactionary response was emblematic of the evolution of a whole layer of former advocates of the "liberation struggle" in the ANC and PAC, who have since become ferocious defenders of wealth and privilege.

The Mayor's Communication Department of the City of Cape Town issued a hypocritical statement on January 27 further justifying continued and deepening social inequality as an inevitable feature of "nation building" and defending the imminent crackdown. "Occupations, illegal actions, invasions, these are all side-paths, so much more tempting for those who are weary," it stated. "But they lead nowhere."

"All that remains at the end of these short diversions is more pain, suffering, conflict and violence. And when we descend there, we will forget where we were going, forever."

In reality, however, it was the city administration and the police that violated the law and trampled on the rights of the demonstrators. The brutality was driven in no small measure because many of those protesting had come from poorer townships.

A statement released by those who attempted to peacefully occupy the common pointed out that the police carried out what amounted to the preemptive detention of those they suspected of heading to the demonstration.

"They penned us inside our townships saying we were not welcome in the leafy suburbs," the statement said. Some buses bringing demonstrators to Rondebosch were blocked and re-routed by the police.

"There were police stationed allover Cape Town: in Kraaifontein, all along Klipfontein Rd, in Little Mowbray, and even in Wynberg," the statement added. "There were Caspirs [armoured personnel carriers], SAPS [South Africa's national police force], Water Cannons, Law Enforcement, Anti-Land Invasions units, Metro Police and an unknown number of undercover police."

While thousands of people had tried to go to the protest site, only a few hundred had managed to reach it, staging a peaceful protest at the entrance to the common.

"Using armoured vehicles and police in riot gear, they herded people together in order to arrest them," the statement said. It charged that the police, who had removed their nametags before wading into the demonstrators, pepper-sprayed an unresisting elderly man, "smacked" a woman trying to film the operation before taking her into custody and assaulted young women who had joined the protest. Many of the protesters were sprayed with blue dye.

Protesters chanted, "We are the 99 percent", and "Forward we shall march, to a people's government" as the police bundled them into the backs of police trucks and vans.

While some residents of the wealthy suburbs adjoining the common had voiced concern that the Occupy protests would harm the fynbos and other plant species there, the police vehicles, including the heavy Casspir armoured cars ended up doing extensive damage to the grounds.

The demonstrators charged that the Anti-Land Invasions unit, which together with other police squads was brought into quell the demonstration, was particularly brutal. The unit has been previously charged by human rights groups with acting illegally and with excessive force against homeless people who have tried to erect shacks on city lands.

COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) provincial secretary Tony Ehrenreich, who is also head of the ANC-led opposition in the City Council and led the ANC's election campaign in the Western Cape, said: "Police stopped people at many points and some from boarding trains. But COSATU filed an application on Friday for a protest on the common on Saturday."

A statement of principles adopted by the demonstrators insists that "political parties and organizations affiliated with political parties are not welcome in our struggle" and that no sympathetic organisation is allowed to dictate policies "COSATU included." In the absence of a clear independent policy, based on socialism and the independent mobilisation of the working class, however, there is clearly substantial pressure to bring the Cape Town protests under the wing of the ANC, which is carrying out policies indistinguishable from those of De Lille on the national level.

All but one of the 41 demonstrators arrested last Friday were released after spending several hours in police jail cells. Mario Wanza, one of the main organisers of the demonstration, who was personally vilified by Mayor De Lille and arrested in Manenberg before the protest began, was held over the weekend.

Charges against all of those arrested, except for Wanza, were dropped on Monday. Wanza was released on a 500 rand bail and on the condition that he not take part in any "illegal protests."

"That my charge wasn't dropped shows victimisation.," Wanza told the *Cape Argus*. "We are considering [bringing) charges against the mayor for abuse of power," he said.

A political commentator noted that the Cape Town authorities' actions were "indicative of the police response to the Occupy phenomenon throughout the world."

"They have shown how they can keep up with the 'world class' standard set in Oakland or New York," said Christopher McMichael, who is completing a PhD in politics at Rhodes University, centering on the militarisation and "securitisation" of South African society. "The response was based upon a militarised outlook of pre-emption," he said. [end]



Who killed the lion king?

There is actually no murder mystery:

When Thomas Sankara was killed after four years as President of Burkina Faso, it was at the orders -- if not at the hands -- of one of his oldest friends, now President Blaise Compaoré. Echoes of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* as much as Disney's *The Lion King*. Why should we care about this particular African tragedy?

We should care because the revolution Sankara led between 1983 and 1987 was one of the most creative and radical that Africa has produced in the decades since independence. He started to blaze a trail that other African countries might follow, a genuine alternative to Western-style modernization -- and, like other radical African leaders such as Patrice Lumumba and Amilcar Cabral, was shot down as a result. Whereas his murderer, still in power eight *now twenty* years later, has pursued self- enrichment and politics as usual -- and has been feted by the West for his compliance.

An incorruptible man

A major anti-corruption drive began in 1987. The tribunal showed Captain Thomas Sankara to have a salary of only $450 a month and his most valuable possessions to be a car, four bikes, three guitars, a fridge and a broken freezer. He was the world's poorest president.

Sankara refused to use the air conditioning in his office on the grounds that such luxury was not available to anyone but a handful of Burkinabes.

When asked why he had let it be known that he did not want his portrait hung in public places, as is the norm for other African leaders (and as Blaise Compaoré does now), Sankara said "There are seven million Thomas Sankaras."

Chronicle of a revolution

- **Feb 1984** -- Tribute payments to and obligatory labour for the traditional village chiefs are outlawed.

- **4 Aug 1984** -- All land and mineral wealth are nationalized. The country's name is changed from the colonial Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, words from two different local languages meaning 'Land of the Incorruptible.'

- **22 Sept 1984** -- A day of solidarity: men are encouraged to go to market and prepare meals to experience for themselves the conditions faced by women.

- **Oct 1984** -- The rural poll tax is abolished.

- **Nov 1984** -- 'Vaccination Commando.' In 15 days 2.5 million children are immunized against meningitis, yellow fever and measles.

- **3 Dec 1984** -- Top civil servants and military officers are required to give one month's pay and other civil servants to give half a month to help fund social development projects.

- **31 Dec 1984** -- All domestic rents are suspended for 1985 and a massive public housing construction program begins.

- **1 Jan 1985** -- Launch of a campaign to plant 10 million trees to slow the Sahara's advance. 4 Aug 1985 An all-women parade marks the anniversary of the Revolution.

- **10 Sep 1985** -- The mounting hostility of the region's conservative regimes is revealed at a meeting in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire.

- **Feb-Apr 1986** -- 'Alpha Commando.' A literacy campaign in nine indigenous languages involves 35,000 people.

- **End of 1986** -- A UN-assisted program brings river blindness under control.

- **15 Oct 1987** -- Sankara is assassinated in a coup d'etat along with 12 aides. His body is unceremoniously dumped in a makeshift grave which quickly becomes a shrine as for days thousands of people file past it to pay their respects. Popular feeling forces the new regime to give Sankara a decent grave.

A villager's assessment of Sankara

I wasn't surprised when he was killed -- the Revolution took me by surprise but that didn't. He had bad men around him, people who just wanted to get fat and drive around in big cars. Many things changed in the Revolution. Not always in the best way. But because of the Revolution we know a little more about the type of politicians we need. It taught us to work by ourselves for ourselves. But Sankara wanted everything to happen too quickly -- he expected too much.

'If I were President myself I would do just as Sankara did and send my ministers out to. the villages to learn what it's like there and give the peasants help. Sankara's very best idea was to teach us that it wasn't enough to live with what we get in wages each month -- we should get by with the minimum and give the rest to the development of the country instead of always asking for aid from overseas."

An eminently corruptible man

- Captain Blaise Compaoré played a key part in the 1983 Revolution -- he led the march on the capital that released Sankara from house arrest to become President.

- Compaoré himself served as Justice Minister and Sankara's effective second-in-command.

- Compaoré has garnered a considerable personal fortune from his position and allegations of corruption and nepotism under his regime now abound. One of his early acts was to buy a presidential plane to reflect his personal prestige.

- Power from a major new hydro project has been diverted to electrify Compaoré's home village, Ziniare, while big towns have been ignored.

Chronicle of a 'rectification'

- **15 Oct 1987** -- Blaise Compaoré assumes the Presidency, backed by Major Jean-Baptiste Lingani and Captain Henri Zongo.

- **Nov 1987** -- The Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, the local bodies which had replaced traditional elites, are abolished.

-**1988** -- Salaries of civil servants, reduced under Sankara, are increased and the special tax that forced them to contribute to health and education projects is scrapped.

- **Dec 1988** -- A World Bank report lauds the unusually high standards of financial management in Burkina Faso during the revolutionary years while noting the increasing incidence of corruption since Compaoré's takeover.

- **Sept 1989** -- Lingani and Zongo attempt to oust Compaoréin a coup and are executed.

- **Dec 1989** -- 31 Sankara supporters are detained without trial for over a year. Lecturer Guillaume Sessouma dies during torture.

- **Dec 1990** -- The draft constitution guarantees freedom of association and expression and property rights. It provides for an elected President and National Assembly.

- **Early 1991** -- A structural-adjustment package is agreed with the IMF, involving privatization and liberalization of the market.

- **May 1991** -- All political prisoners are released.

- **Dec 1991** -- Blaise Compaoré wins the presidential election. This is not surprising since he is the only candidate -- 73 per cent of the electorate do not vote.

- 1993 – The IMF lends Burkina $67m for 1993-5 on condition that it continues implementing free-market policies.

- June 1993 – An official presidential visit to Paris establishes Compaoré as France's favourite ally in West Africa.

- Jan 1994 – The CFA franc is halved in value in relation to the French franc at the insistence of Paris and the IMF.

- March 1994 – Compaoré tightens his control, sacking the prime minister to install a loyalist.

A villager's assessment of Compaoré

"France gave Blaise money. I don't know exactly how but they did. And when you have money in Africa you can do anything. The trade unions have been bought off, for example – the President gives them money so that they'll shut their mouths. He's our President, we agreed to that – but his policies come from France. Every order comes from France and he never asks the Assembly's opinion.

"There is no real opposition. Politics here means who will give money. People who want to become ministers or deputies look to develop themselves first and the country after – they all know the Western way of life, they want everything easy. Politics is just a means of becoming rich and giving you a big car. And Blaise gives money to opposition groups so they will divide and, voila, no opposition. Another Sankara simply couldn't arrive out of the current democratic landscape."



Thomas Sankara 1949-1987

"I would like to leave behind me the conviction that if we maintain a certain amount of caution and organization we deserve victory... You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future. It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen. We must dare to invent the future."

– Thomas Sankara, 1985



Nat Turner

The Gospel According to Nat Turner

By Edgar "G-BamShango" Pitts

Births hurt
I know because I see the wars
and the Blood that Pours
when the Poor declares that they're
determined to be Poor no more
I see the women mourning the fruits
of their wombs at the tombs of their
doomed children
The truth hurts the one who is bold
enough to reveal it
so many conceal it like the Pharisees
and use Religion like a fig leaf to deceive

the masses with Promises that vanish
like the Morning Dew at sunrise
But from among the people only a few Rise
while the cry for Justice falls on deaf ears
fears not confronted grow into mountains
but they say Faith Moves Mountains
So I'm drinking Holy Water from the fountain
of the rock that was cracked by Moses
Baptized to be the chosen in the furnace of
Affliction of the Middle Passage by a savage
people who will never see us as their equals
They crucified Jesus then change his facial
features
to resemble the creatures
that slaughtered our ancestors
They crucified the Dread
so I'm gonna crucify
this verse with his teachings

This is the Gospel according to Nat Turner,
Sojourner, John Brown
and all the other Souljahs
who envisioned us before we were fetuses
and taught us through the ages on pages
in and out of cages
from the slave ship to the gallows
about this evil apparatus that opposes us
Judas sold Jesus for Forty Pieces of Silver
and they sold us for liquor and gunpowder
the similarities are so profound
I can't be wrong if I say that
I was lost now I'm found
and I still stand above ground
behind enemy lines in defiance
of all the lies
as I watch my foes shout "Crucify Him!"
I count my blessings then I scream out
to the Heavens: "Lord forgive them Not
for they know exactly what they do!"
So I violated their curfews
and when faced with danger
I still speak Truth to Power
or be devoured like Jonah
by the storm of his life
that's why I need a Sista
like Isis for my wife
who knows how to face crisis
when the strife gets to hectic

They crucified the Dread
so I'm gonna crucify this verse
with his teachings

Treachery Perfected
and taken for Virtue
stains the soul like mildew
the whole world is subdued
and under a curfew by a few
who have allied themselves with the reptiles
the night sky is dotted by satellites
that intercept the light of the Stars
darkness now prevails and jail multiplies
the senses deprived of Human Contact
the Soul permanently scarred
I see the deceived masses giving applause
to the speeches of demagogues
trying to quench their thirst
by drinking water from a mirage
being bombarded with a beverage
of counter-intelligence propaganda
There's no more vacancy at Hotel Rawanda
The CIA killed Lumumba

They said Jesus said
that we must give to Cesar
what belongs to Cesar
but I don't believe the Preacher
So I say we should get Cesar
and silence the Preacher
unless he's preaching the Gospel
According to Nat Turner

They crucified the Dread
so I'm gonna crucify this verse
with his teachings.



Edgar Pitts #04616-084
USP Atwater
PO Box 019001
Atwater, CA 95301



Attention Party Cadre

Comrade Bobby Dixon, the NABPP-PC Minister of Justice, would like for the comrades to keep him posted with developments in building Party collectives inside the razor-wire plantations and with building the organizational unity and discipline of NABPP-PC. As informal circles develop into organized collectives, a division of labor among the collective leadership becomes necessary. Cadre need to be selected to see to it that discipline is maintained by all the comrades and that the Rules of Conduct are obeyed.

This is the job of the Ministry of Justice, which we must build as we grow as a vanguard revolutionary organization. Comrade Bobby is a veteran Black Panther with long experience in the prison movement in California, and he has been selected by the Central Committee to oversee this aspect of building NABPP-PC. He needs your input and to have you keep him informed.

Bobby M. Dixon #C41652
PO Box 2000
H-209 Lower, CMF
Vacaville, CA 95696-2000

Also the Minister of Information, Comrade Ali Shaka would like to be kept informed:

Bennie Hayes #82598
Telford Unit
3899 State Hwy. #98
New Boston, TX 75570

And so would Comrade Iven Ra, our Minister of Education

Stephen Anderson #230640
HCCF PO Box 569
Whiteville, TN 38075

And our Chairman:

Shaka S. Zulu #8613238
NSP PO Box 2300
168 Frontage
Newark, NJ 07114



Poverty of Philosophy

Immortal Technique

Most of my Latino and black people who are struggling to get food, clothes and shelter in the hood are so concerned with that, that philosophising about freedom and socialist democracy is usually unfortunately beyond their rationale. They don't realize that America can't exist without separating them from their identity, because if we had some sense of who we really are, there's no way in hell we'd allow this country to push it's genocidal consensus on our homelands. This ignorance exists, but it can be destroyed.

Niggas talk about change and working within the system to achieve that. The problem with always being a conformist is that when you try to change the system from within, it's not you who changes the system; it's the system that will eventually change you. There is usually nothing wrong with compromise in a situation, but compromising yourself in a situation is another story completely, and I have seen this happen long enough in the few years that I've been alive to know that it's a serious problem. Latino America is a huge colony of countries whose presidents are cowards in the face of economic imperialism. You see, third world countries are rich places, abundant in resources, and many of these countries have the capacity to feed their starving people and the children we always see digging for food in trash on commercials. But plutocracies, in other words a government run by the rich such as this one and traditionally oppressive European states, force the third world into buying overpriced, unnecessary goods while exporting huge portions of their natural resources.

I'm quite sure that people will look upon my attitude and sentiments and look for hypocrisy and hatred in my words. My revolution is born out of love for my people, not hatred for others.

You see, most of Latinos are here because of the great inflation that was caused by American companies in Latin America. Aside from that, many are seeking a life away from the puppet democracies that were funded by the United States; places like El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Republica Dominicana, and not just Spanish-speaking countries either, but Haiti and Jamaica as well.

As different as we have been taught to look at each other by colonial society, we

are in the same struggle and until we realize that, we'll be fighting for scraps from the table of a system that has kept us subservient instead of being self-determined. And that's why we have no control over when the embargo will stop in Cuba, or when the bombs will stop dropping in Vieques.

But you see, here in America the attitude that is fed to us is that outside of America there live lesser people. "Fuck them, let them fend for themselves." No, Fuck you, they are you. No matter how much you want to dye your hair blonde and put fake eyes in, or follow an anorexic standard of beauty, or no matter how many diamonds you buy from people who exploit your own brutality to get them, no matter what kind of car you drive or what kind of fancy clothes you put on, you will never be them. They're always gonna look at you as nothing but a little monkey. I'd rather be proud of what I am, rather than desperately trying to be something I'm really not, just to fit in. And whether we want to accept it or not, that's what this culture or lack of culture is feeding us.

I want a better life for my family and for my children, but it doesn't have to be at the expense of millions of lives in my homeland. We're given the idea that if we didn't have these people to exploit then America wouldn't be rich enough to let us have these little petty material things in our lives and basic standards of living. No, that's wrong. It's the business giants and the government officials who make all the real money. We have whatever they kick down to us. My enemy is not the average white man, it's not the kid down the block or the kids I see on the street; my enemy is the white man I don't see: the people in the white house, the corporate monopoly owners, fake liberal politicians those are my enemies. The generals of the armies that are mostly conservatives those are the real Mother-Fuckers that I need to bring it to, not the poor, broke country-ass soldier that's too stupid to know shit about the way things are set up.

In fact, I have more in common with most working and middle-class white people than I do with most rich black and Latino people. As much as racism bleeds America, we need to understand that classism is the real issue. Many of us are in the same boat and it's sinking, while these bougie Mother-Fuckers ride on a luxury liner, and as long as we keep fighting over kicking people out of the little boat we're all in, we're gonna miss an opportunity to gain a better standard of living as a whole.

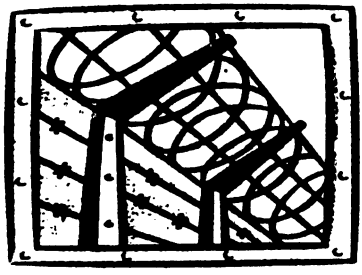
In other words, I don't want to escape the plantation I want to come back, free all my people, hang the Mother-Fucker that kept me there and burn the house to the god damn ground. I want to take over the encomienda and give it back to the people who work the land.

You cannot change the past but you can make the future, and anyone who tells you different is a Fucking lethargic devil. I don't look at a few token Latinos and black people in the public eye as some type of achievement for my people as a whole. Most of those successful individuals are sell-outs and house Negros.

But, I don't consider brothers a sell-out if they move out of the ghetto. Poverty has nothing to do with our people. It's not in our culture to be poor. That's only been the last 500 years of 'Our' history; look at the last 2000 years of our existence and what we brought to the world in terms of science, mathematics, agriculture and forms of government. You know the idea of a confederation of provinces where one federal government controls the states? The Europeans who came to this country stole that idea from the Iroquois LEAGUE. The idea of impeaching a ruler comes from an Aztec tradition. That's why Montezuma was stoned to death by his own people 'cause he represented the agenda of white Spaniards once he was captured, not the Aztec people who would become Mexicans.

So in conclusion, I'm not gonna vote for anybody just 'cause they black or Latino they have to truly represent the community and represent what's good for all of us proletariat.

Porque sino entonces te mando por el carajo cabron gusano hijo de puta, seramoslibre pronto, viva la revolucion. VIVA LA REVOLUCION!



Race, Prison and Poverty

The Race to Incarcerate In The Age Of Correctional Keynesianism

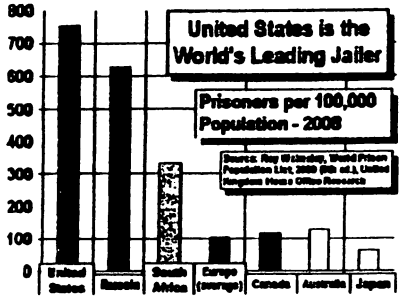
Paul Street

History Is A Weapon

In the last two-and-a-half decades, the prison population has undergone what the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics director Jan Chaiken last year called "literally incredible" expansion. Chaiken reported a quadrupling of the U.S. incarceration rate since 1975. That rate, more than 600 prisoners for every 100,000 people, is by far the highest in the industrialized world. The U.S. incarcerates its citizens at a rate six times higher than Canada, England, and France, seven times higher than Switzerland and Holland, and ten times Sweden and Finland. Beyond sheer magnitude, a second aspect of America's incarceration boom is its heavily racialized nature. On any given day, Chaiken reported, 30 percent of African-American males ages 20 to 29 are "under correctional supervision" -- either in jail or prison or on probation or parole. Especially chilling is a statistical model used by the Bureau of Justice Statistics to determine the life chances of incarceration for individuals in different racial and ethnic groups. Based on current rates, it predicts that a young Black man age 16 in 1998 faces a 29 percent chance of spending time in prison during his life. The corresponding statistic for white men in the same age group is 4 percent. According to Thomas K. Lowenstein, director of the Electronic Policy Network, 7 percent of Black children -- nearly 9 times more than white children -- have an incarcerated parent.

In Illinois, the prison population has grown by more than 60 percent since 1990. That growth has been fueled especially by Black admissions, including a rising number of nonviolent drug offenders. Two thirds of the state's more than 44,000 prisoners are African-American. According to the *Chicago Reporter*, a monthly magazine that covers race and poverty issues, 1 in 5 Black Cook County (which contains Chicago and some of its suburbs) men in their 20s are either in prison or jail or on parole. For Cook County whites of the same gender and age, the corresponding ratio is 1 in 104. Illinois has 115,746 more persons enrolled in its 4-year public universities than in its prisons. When it comes to Blacks, however, it has 10,000 more prisoners. For every African-American enrolled in those universities, two and a-half Blacks are in prison or on parole in Illinois. Similar racially specific reversals of meaning can be found in other states with significant Black populations. In New York, the Justice Policy Institute reports that more Blacks entered prison just for drug offense than graduated from the state's massive university system with undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degrees combined in the 1990s.

In some inner-city neighborhoods, a preponderant majority of Black males now possess criminal records. According to Congressperson Danny Davis, fully 70 percent of men between ages 18 and 45 in the impoverished North Lawndale neighborhood on Chicago's West Side are ex-offenders. Chris Moore, director of the Chicago Urban League's Male Involvement Program, which provides support services to 16-; to 35-year-old fathers in 2 high poverty South Side neighborhoods, reports that the same percentage of his clients are saddled with criminal records. Job placement counselors at the League's Employment, Training, and Counseling Department estimate that half of their 3,742 predominantly Black clients last year listed felony records as a leading barrier to employment. Criminologists Dina Rose and Todd Clear found Black neighborhoods in Tallahassee where every resident could identify at least one friend or relative who has been incarcerated. In predominantly Black urban communities across the country, incarceration is so widespread and commonplace that it has become what Chaiken calls "almost a normative life experience."



A Many-Sided Disenfranchisement

Researchers and advocates tracking the impact of mass incarceration find a number of devastating consequences in high-poverty Black communities. The most well known form of this so-called "collateral damage in the war on drugs" is the widespread political disenfranchisement of felons and ex-felons. Ten states deny voting rights for life to ex-felons. According to the Sentencing Project, 48 states prohibit inmates from voting while serving a felony sentence, 32 states deny the vote to felons on parole, and 29 states disenfranchise felony probationers. Thanks to these rules, 13 percent of all Black men in the U S. have lost their

electoral rights – "a bitter aftermath," notes British sociologist David Ladipo, "to the expansion of voting rights secured, at such cost, by the freedom marches of the fifties and sixties." But the economic effects are equally significant. When prison and felony records are thrown into that mixture, the labor market consequences are often disastrous. Thus, it is not uncommon to hear academic researchers and service providers cite unemployment rates as high as 50 percent for people with records. One study, based in California during the early 1990s, found that just 21 percent of that state's parolees were working full time. In a detailed study, Karen Needels found that less than 40 percent of 1,176 men released from Georgia's prison system in 1976 had any officially recorded earnings in each year from 1983 to 1991. For those with earnings, average annual wages were exceedingly low and differed significantly by race: white former inmates averaged $7,880 per year and Blacks made just $4,762. In the most widely cited study in the growing literature on the labor market consequences of racially disparate criminal justice policies, Harvard economist Richard Freeman used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Limiting his sample to out-of-school men and controlling for numerous variables (drug usage, education, region, and age) that might bias upward the link between criminal records and weak labor market attachment, Freeman found that those who had been in jail or on probation in 1980 had a 19 percent higher chance of being unemployed in 1988 than those with no involvement in the criminal justice system. He also found that prison records reduced the amount of time employed after release by 25 to 30 percent.

More recently, Princeton sociologist Bruce Western has mined NLSY data to show that incarceration has "large and enduring effects on job-prospects of ex-convicts." He finds that the negative labor market effects of youth incarceration can last for more than a decade and that adult incarceration reduces paid employment by five to ten weeks annually. Since incarceration rates are especially high among those with the least power in the labor, market (young and unskilled minority men), he shows, U.S. incarceration dramatically exacerbates inequality. This research is consistent with numerous experimental studies suggesting that the employment prospects of job applicants with criminal records are far worse than the chances of persons who have never been convicted or imprisoned and from the testimony of job placement professionals who deal with ex-offenders. "Even when paroled inmates are able to find jobs," the *New York Times* reported last Fall, "they earn only half as much as people of the same social and economic background who have not been incarcerated." The obstacles to ex-offender employment include the simple refusal of many employers to even consider hiring an "ex-con." Employers routinely check for criminal backgrounds in numerous sectors, including banking, security, financial services, law, education, and health care. But for many jobs, 'employer attitudes are irrelevant: state codes places steep barriers to the hiring of ex-offenders in numerous government and other occupations. At the same time, ex-offenders are further disadvantaged in the labor market by the nature of daily prison experience. "The increasingly violent and over-crowded state of prisons and jails," notes Western, "is likely to produce certain attitudes, mannerisms, and behavioral practices that 'on the inside' function to enhance survival but are not compatible with success in the conventional job market." The alternately aggressive and sullen posture that prevails behind bars is deadly in a job market where entry-level occupations increasingly demand "soft" skills related to selling and customer service. In this as in countless other ways, the inmate may be removed, at least temporarily, from prison but prison lives on within the ex-offender, limiting his "freedom" on the "outside." The barriers to employment created by mass incarceration for African-Americans are not limited to those with records. As sociologist Elijah Anderson has noted, the "astonishing" number and percentage of Black men who are under the supervision of the criminal justice system "must be considered partly responsible for the widespread perception of young Black men as dangerous and not to be trusted."

Ex-offenders' chances for successful "reintegration" are worsened by the de-legitimization of rehabilitation that has accompanied the rise of the American mass incarceration state. Under the now dominant penal paradigm of literal "incapacitation," the number of inmates enrolled in drug treatment, job-training, or educational programs has been in steep decline since the 1980s. According to the Institute on Crime, Justice, and Corrections, just 9 percent of prisoners are currently engaged in full-time job-training or education activities. Numerous states, including New York, have eliminated inmates' right to take college extension courses and Congress has repealed prisoners' right to receive Pell grants to pay for college tuition.

Savage Ironies and Sinister Synergies

The situation arising from mass Black incarceration is fraught with savage, self-fulfilling policy ironies and sinister sociological synergies. Criminal justice policies are pushing hundreds of thousands of already disadvantaged and impoverished "underclass" Blacks further from minimally remunerative engagement with the labor market.

According to Lowenstein, 80 percent of America's prison inmates are parents. Researchers estimate that children of prisoners are five times more likely to experience incarceration than those who never experience the pain of having one of their parents imprisoned. Meanwhile, incarceration deepens a job-skill deficit that a significant body of research shows to be a leading factor explaining "criminal" behavior among disadvantaged people in the first place. "Crime rates are inversely related," Richard B. Freeman and Jeffrey Fagan have shown, "to expected legal wages, particularly among young males with limited job skills or prospects." The "war on drugs" that contributes so strongly to minority incarceration inflates the price of underground substances, combining with ex-offenders' shortage of marketable skills in the legal economy to create irresistible incentives for parolees to engage in precisely the sort of income-generating conduct that leads back to prison.

In Illinois today, 36 percent of ex-offenders and a staggering 48 percent of Black ex-offenders return to prison within three years. These numbers bother Danny Davis, whose Seventh District on Chicago's West Side contains five ex-prisoner transition centers. As men and women in his distrct

"transition from incarceration to freedom," Davis recently told the Illinois Senate Judiciary Committee, "What they need most are jobs. What they find instead," Davis has learned, "are cold stares, unreturned phone calls, and closed doors. The jobs are far and few between, and in most cases non-existent" even for "serious and earnest men and women, working to clean up their act, and transition into productive citizens."

Denied what Davis calls "a second chance to become productive citizens," even rehabilitation-minded ex-offenders often find themselves re-enmeshed in illicit but income-generating activities that land them back in downstate lockups. The lost potential earnings, savings, consumer demand, and human and social capital that result from mass incarceration cost Black communities untold millions of dollars in potential economic development, worsening an inner-city political economy already crippled by decades of capital flight and de-industrialization. The dazed, battered, and embittered products of the prison-industrial complex are released back into a relatively small number of predominantly Black and high-poverty zip-codes and census tracts, deepening the savage concentration of poverty, crime, and despair that is the hallmark of modern American "hyper-segregation" by race and class.

The growth in spending on prisons is directly related to a decline in the growth of positive social spending in such poverty – and crime –reducing areas as education, child-care, and job training. Sociologists John Hagan and Ronit Dinovitzer find that public investment in incarceration is now "so extensive that several large states now spend as much or more money to incarcerate young adults than to educate their college-age citizens." From the 1980s through the 1990s, they report, correctional spending has risen at a faster rate than any other type of state expenditure category, creating significant opportunity costs that contribute to a vicious, self-fulfilling circle of negative public investment.

The New Racism

Meanwhile, prisoners' deletion from official U.S. unemployment statistics contributes to excessively rosy perceptions of American socioeconomic performance that worsen the political climate for minorities. Bruce Western has shown that factoring incarceration into unemployment rates challenges the conventional American notion that the United States' "unregulated" labor markets have been out-performing Europe's supposedly hyper-regulated employment system. Far from taking a laissez-faire approach, "the U.S. state has made a large and coercive intervention into the labor market through the expansion of the legal system." An American unemployment rate adjusted for imprisonment would rise by two points, giving the U.S. a jobless ratio much closer to that of European nations, where including inmates jobless count raises the joblessness rate by a few tenths of a percentage point Including incarceration would especially boost the official Black male unemployment rate, which Western estimates, counting prison, at nearly 39 percent during the mid-1990s. If you factor in incarceration, Western and his colleague Becky Petit found, there was "no enduring recovery in the employment of young Black high-school drop-outs" during the long Clinton boom.

By artificially reducing both aggregate and racially specific unemployment rates, mass incarceration makes it easier for the majority culture to continue to ignore the urban ghettoes that live on beneath official rhetoric about "opportunity" being generated by "free markets." It facilitates the elimination of honest discussion of America's deep and inseparably linked inequalities of race and class from the nation's public discourse. It encourages and enables a "new," subtler racism in an age when open, public displays of bigotry have been discredited. Relying heavily on longstanding American opportunity myths and standard class ideology, this new racism blames inner-city minorities for their own "failure" to match white performance in a supposedly now free, meritorious, and color-blind society. Whites who believe, thanks partly to the decline of explicit public racism, that racial barriers have been lifted in the United States think that people of color who do not "succeed" fall short because of choices they made and/or because of inherent cultural or even biological limitations. "As white America sees it," write Leonard Steinhorn and Barbara Diggs Brown in their disturbing *By The Color of Our Skin: The Illusion of Integration and the Reality of Race* (2000), "every effort has been made to welcome Blacks into the American mainstream, and now they're on their own... 'We got the message; we made the corrections – get on with it!'"

Correctional Keynesianism

The ultimate policy irony at the heart of America's passion for prisons is summarized in the phrase correctional Kenynesianism. The prison construction boom, fed by the rising "market" of Black offenders, is an often remarkable job and tax-base creator and local economic multiplier for predominantly white "down" or "up" state communities that are generally removed from urban minority concentrations. Those communities, themselves often recently hollowed-out by 'the de-industrializing and family farm-destroying gales of the "free market" system, have become part of a prison-industrial lobby that presses for harsher sentences and tougher laws, seeking to protect and expand their economic base even as crime rates continue to fall. With good reason: prison- building boom serves as what Ladjpo calls "a latter-day Keynesian infrastuctural investment program for [often] blight-struck communities... Indeed, it has been phenomenally successful in terms of creating relatively secure, decent paid, and often unionized jobs." According to Todd Clear, the negative labor market effects of mass incarceration on black communities are probably minor "compared to the economic relocation of resources" from Black to white communities that mass incarceration entails. As Clear explains in cool and candid terms: "Each prisoner represents an economic asset that has been removed from that community and placed elsewhere. As an economic being, the person would spend money at or near his or her area of residence – typically, an inner city. Imprisonment displaces that economic activity: Instead of buying snacks in a local deli, the prisoner makes those purchases in a prison commissary. The removal may represent a loss of economic value to the home community, but it is a boon to the prison community. Each prisoner represents as much as $25,000 in income for the community in which the prison is located, not to mention the value of constructing the prison facility in the first place. This can be a massive transfer of value: A

young male worth a few thousand dollars of support to children and local purchases is transformed into a $25,000 financial asset to a rural prison community. The economy of the rural community is artificially amplified, the local city economy artificially deflated."

Consistent with this a recent *Chicago Tribune* story bears the perverse title "Towns Put Dreams in Prisons." In downstate Hoopeston, Illinois; the *Tribune* reports, there is "talk of the mothballed canneries that once made this a boom town and whether any of that bustling spirit might return if the Illinois Depm1ment of Corrections comes to town." "You don't like to think about incarceration," Hoopeston's Mayor told the *Tribune*, "but this is an opportunity for Hoopeston. We've been plagued by plant closings." Ault's willingness to enter the prison sweepstakes was validated by another small town mayor, Andy Hutchens of Ina, Illinois. According to the *Tribune*, in a passage that reminds us to include diversion of tax revenue among the ways that mass incarceration steals wealth from the inner city: "Before [Ina's] prison was built, the city took in just $17,000 a year in motor fuel tax revenue. Now the figure is more like $72,000. Last year's municipal budget appropriation was $380,000. More than half of that money is prison revenue. Streets that were paved in chipped gravel and oil for generations soon will all be covered in asphalt An $850,000 community center that doubles as a gym and computer lab for the school across the street is being paid for with prison money," Hutchens said.

"It really figures out this way. This little town *of* 450 people is getting the tax money of a town *of* 2,700." Hutchens said, and then added with a grin, "And those people in that prison can't vote me out of office."

Mass Incarceration

According to "get-tough on crime" politicians and policy-makers, "prison works": it reduces crime rates. But that intuitively seductive argument, which cites the declining federal crime index of the 1990s as its primary evidence, cannot explain why crime rates increased in the 1970s and the late 1980s while prison rates grew at the same rate as they did in the 1990s. It ignores the fact that drug convictions do not figure into the federal index<e crucial omission since incarceration rates are strongly fed by the "war on drugs." It ignores the strong possibility that other factors, including the record-length economic expansion of the 1990s, provide better explanations than mass incarceration for declining official crime. It is embarrassed, finally, by comparative international data. U.S. citizens are just as likely to be victimized by crime as citizens in European countries who jail and imprison relatively tiny percentages of their population because they view prisons as fundamentally criminogenicas breeders of crime. Americans are far more likely than their low-incarceration European counterparts to be victimized by rape, murder, robbery, and violent assault in general.

Clear has discovered three "crime-enhancing effects of prison" on impoverished urban communities. First, the rampant arrest and incarceration of inner-city youth for drug crimes creates an ironic "replacement effect" that "cancels out the crime-prevention benefits of incapacitation." In the face of a stable demand fur illegal substances, mass arrest and incarceration "creates job openings in the drug delivery enterprise and allows for an ever-broadening recruitment of citizens into the illegal trade." Modern criminal justice practice is often blind to this phenomenon, Clear argued, because its "atomistic" understanding of criminal behavior as purely individual behavior obscures the group basis of much illegal inner -city activity. Second, mass incarceration deepens the presence of negative "social factors" that contribute to "criminality" in minority communities: broken families, inequality, poverty, alienation, and social disorder. Third, mass incarceration ironically undercuts the deterrent power of prison.

"As more people acquire a grounded knowledge of prison life," Clear learned, "the power of prison to deter crime through fear is diminished." Thus, *Newsweek* reporter Ellis Cose noted last year that prison has "become so routine" in some neighborhoods "that going in can be an opportunity for reconnecting with friends." A drug-dealer from Maryland told Cose of his "panic on conviction. Having heard horror stories about young men abused inside, he fretted about how he would fend off attacks. Once behind bars, he discovered that the population consisted largely of buddies from the hood. Instead of something to fear, prison 'was like a big camp.'"

Clear and fellow criminologist Dina Rose think that certain U.S. communities have reached what they see as a curious criminal justice "tipping point"- the locus at which repressive state policies actually drive up crime rates. When I percent or more of a neighborhood's residents are imprisoned per year, they theorize, mass incarceration incapacitates neighborhood social networks to the point where they. can no longer keep crime under control. But, of course, the communities "tipped" by criminal justice policies are located in a relatively small number of minority-based inner-city zip codes. The record 600,000 offenders released from prison last year "return," notes the *New York Times*, "largely to poor neighborhoods of large cities."

Part of the Tangle

It is no simple matter to detennine the precise extent to which mass incarceration is exacerbating the deep socio-economic and related cultural and political traumas that already plague inner-city communities and help explain disproportionate Black "criminality," arrest, and incarceration in the first place. Still, it is undeniable that the race to incarcerate is having a profoundly negative effect on Black communities. Equally undeniable is the fact that Black incarceration rates reflect deep racial bias in the criminal justice system and the broader society. Do the cheerleaders of "get tough" crime and sentencing policy really believe that African-Americans deserve to suffer so disproportionately at the hands of the criminal justice system? There is a vast literature showing that structural, institutional, and cultural racism and severe segregation by race and class are leading causes of inner-city crime. Another considerable body of literature shows that Blacks are victims of racial bias at every level of the criminal justice system -- from stop, frisk, and arrest to prosecution, sentencing, release, and execution. These disparities give legitimacy to the movement of ex-offender groups for the expungement of criminal and prison records for many nonviolent offenses, especially in cases where ex-convicts have shown an

earnest desire to "go straight." Further and deeper remedies will be required. These include a moratorium on new prison construction (to stop the insidious, self-replicating expansion of the prison-industrial complex), the repeal of laws that deny voting rights to felons and ex-felons, amnesty and release for most inmates convicted of non-violent crimes, de-criminalization of narcotics, the repeal of the "war on drugs" at home and abroad, revision of state and federal sentencing and local "zero tolerance" practices and ordinances, abolition of racial, ethnic, and class profiling in police practice, and the outlawing of private, for-profit prisons and other economic activities that derive investment gain from mass incarceration.

Activists and policy makers should call and make plans for a criminal- to social- justice "peace dividend": the large-scale transfer of funds spent on mass arrest, surveillance, and incarceration into such policy areas as drug treatment, job-training, transitional services for ex-offenders, and public education regarding the employment potential of ex-offenders. They should call and make plans for the diversion of criminal justice resources from "crime in the streets" (i.e., the harassment and imprisonment of lower-class and inner-city people) to serious engagement with under-sentenced "crime in the suites." More broadly, they should seek a general redistribution of resources from privileged and often fantastically wealthy persons to those most penalized from birth by America's long and intertwined history of inherited class and race privilege.

America's expanding prison, probation, and parole populations are recruited especially from what leading slavery reparations advocate Randall Robinson calls "the millions of African-Americans bottom-mired in urban hells by the savage time-release social debilitations of American slavery." The ultimate solutions lay, perhaps, beyond the parameters of the existing politic-economic order. "Capitalism," Eugene Debs argued in 1920, "needs and must, have the prison to protect itself from the [lower-class] criminals it has created." But the examples of Western Europe and Canada, where policy makers prefer prevention and rehabilitation through more social-democratic approaches, show that mass incarceration is hardly an inevitable product of capitalism per se. Nothing can excuse policymakers and activists from the responsibility to end racist criminal justice practices that are significantly exacerbating the difficulties faced by the nation's most truly and intractably disadvantaged. More then merely a symptom of the tangled mess of problems that create, sustain, and deepen America's savage patterns of class and race inequality, mass incarceration has become a central part of the mess. For these and other reasons, it will be an especially worthy target for creative, democratic protest and policy formation in the new millennium.[10]

[10] Originally published at Z Magazine. Paul Street is research director at the Chicago Urban League. His articles, essays, and reviews have appeared in *In These Times, Z Magazine, Monthly Review, Dissent, Journal of Social History, Mid-America,* and the *Journal of American Ethnic History*

Draft Points of Unity of the Brown Panther Organizing Committee of the United Panther Movement

1. We are to nurture critical consciousness; as the cultural movement of knowledge of self, self-development, and education.

2. We will build community services programs through solidarity with kindred movements and organizations.

3. We will help bring an end to the struggle between the races and the classes to help create stronger communities. (we want to end the struggle between the races, and build authentic unity to end class struggle).

4.We propose through education we can keep our people working towards better economic and personal improvement.

5. We will organize cultural, social, political and spiritual projects, programs and campaigns to uplift the people.

6. We want full employment for all people who desire and are able to work.

7. We want decent housing fit for the shelter of human beings for all people.

8. We believe that personal development through the study of one's true history is essential.

9. We want an end to political, judicial and municipal corruption at the state federal and international level.

10. We will develop self-defense and legal resources to prevent harm from coming to our brothers and sisters.

11.Our organization is comprised of people from the urban centers who are inter-generational, inter-faith, and multi-racial, and our tradition is multi-cultural.

12. We will get people connected with programs that enrich the quality of life for inner city residents.

13. We will serve: as a vanguard united with other brothers/sisters of all communities to liberate people and help build better societies.

14. We will create an effective bilingual program, which will help foreign-speaking people navigate the system, and help English-speaking people learn new languages.

15. We know that everyone in Amerika is American, that goes beyond any border. Our people should be getting citizenship anywhere they call home.

To criticize or make suggestions regarding this document, or to learn more about the BPOC, contact Comrade Jorge at:

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Panther Love!

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