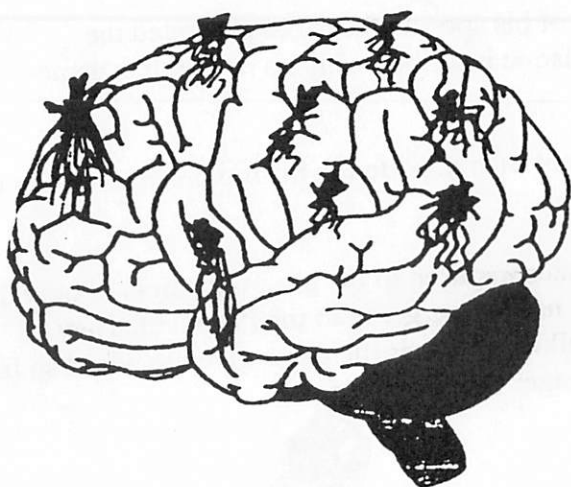


SHRAPNEL

# 2



Bomb Fragments  
for the Mind

## “Walking Eagle”

President Bush was invited to address a major gathering of the American Indian Nation last weekend in Arizona. He spoke for almost an hour on his future plans for increasing every Native Americans present standard of living. He referred to his career as Governor of Texas, how he had signed “YES” 1,237 times- for every Indian issue that came on his desk for approval. (2)

Although the President was vague on the details of his plan, he seemed the most enthusiastic about his future ideas for helping his “red brothers”.

At the conclusion of his speech, the tribes presented the president with a plaque inscribed with his new Indian name- Walking Eagle.

The proud President then departed in his motorcade, waving to the crowds.

A news reporter later inquired to the group of chiefs of how they came to select the new name given to the President. They explained that Walking Eagle is the name given to a bird so full of shit it can no longer fly.



What does it mean to be a revolutionary comrade? What does it mean to be a comrade in the revolutionary struggle? This is the question put to me by comrade Coyote.

3

First of all, it is this connection with a person that I have never met, never even seen a picture of, but whose words I've read and resonated with. A person that I am separated from by hundreds of miles and thick concrete topped with razor wire, Coyote and I are both prisoners but from different states. The ruling class has seen fit to lock both of us up for many years, to isolate us, to excommunicate us from society. But we are more than just prisoners; we are also revolutionaries and Anarchist guerrillas. Despite the miles and concrete and razor wire, we are connected by the mind and the rebel hearts that beat vibrant and defiant life in our chests, this is what it means to be a comrade.

Being a revolutionary comrade also means that I always stand with the people and against the oppressor. That means always. Revolutionary Anarchists have faith in the beautiful idea that the people, working together, without artificial hierarchy or authority, can better manage our lives than any government, state, or cop could ever do. Being a revolutionary comrade means living out this idea in everyday life, even if it sometimes feels like you are the only one doing it. There are comrades all over the world, of all different skin tones and all different languages, living out the same idea. You are never alone in the revolutionary struggle.

And what is the revolutionary struggle? What does revolution mean? I am talking about the complete overthrow of the existing system and all its mechanisms and rebuilding a society from the bottom up. I am not talking about votes, elections, or tweaking the system. I am talking revolution. We all deserve more than this system could ever provide—we owe ourselves so much more. A revolutionary comrade is someone who dares to dedicate their lives to this dream. Some of us are in prison; some of us are in the so-called free world. Some of us are men, some women. We are of all races, cultures, and ages. There is a place for you...if you dare.

“When passion fades”

With deep, calm, relaxed breaths  
He says to me,  
That he's just trying to beat life, because  
He can't cheat death, and I  
Shrug my shoulders and say, “I Guess?”  
And this was how our conversation began.

(4)

Nothing to talk about anymore, these days  
His life has become routine.  
A sad, sad situation, when passion fades  
And the mind erodes, while  
Eyes are stuck on the television screen

Coyote, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009

“My World”

She reads fantasy books, sometimes  
To escape the redundancy of her life  
Marriage seems like a trap to her  
And she doesn't see the point in it  
Any more

I write to her at her work  
Her husband doesn't know.  
And I love this woman, very much  
Which is why I'm left waiting  
For her to let go

Freedom lies on the other side of  
Pointless misery  
Where the sun shines and the birds sing  
And I'm just looking for a twinge of a  
Glimmer, of happiness  
In her beautiful green eyes  
To brighten up my dreary world

Coyote, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009

## “Ten Words of Nahuatl”

- 1) TLAHCOYOHUAC- Midnight
- 2) ZAHUA- To fast, to abstain, hunger- strike
- 3) TLATLACUALOYAN- Chow hall
- 4) ZOQUITL- Mud
- 5) TLAHMAH- Doctor
- 6) XIHUITL- A Year
- 7) TLAHCUILOA- To write
- 8) YAOCHIHCHIHUA- To arm oneself for battle
- 9) TLAHCUILOHHUILIA- To reply to someone in writing
- 10) YAOTL- Enemy

## AMERICAS PRISONS IN THE DOCK

The United States incarcerates a higher proportion of its population than any other country, yet a report published recently reveals a system failing in its essential functions. With public opinion against forgiveness, what hope is there that it will make a difference?

The United States now has more people incarcerated than any other nation on earth. Yet the American people know virtually nothing about prisons. Most of them are unaware that the number of people incarcerated, 2.2 million, has quadrupled since 1980; that over half of the inmates are African Americans although only 12.5 percent of all Americans are black; that at least 500,000 prisoners have serious mental health conditions; and that the reoffending rate is about 60%.

Earlier this year the privately sponsored commission of safety and abuse in America's prisons reported on the state of the country's prisons, exposing the poor conditions, the lack of hope and the over-reliance of the United States on prisons as a solution to crime.

The 20- person body spent months on hearings on all aspects of the problems in some 5,000 jails and prisons in the United States before producing their 126-page report on a system that sees 13.5 million people each year spend some time in jail or prison at a cost of more than \$60 billion a year.

⑥

Twenty years ago the United States, congress and most state legislatures enacted laws that require mandatory sentences and eliminated parole. Laws were passed requiring a life sentence for a third offense. But major offenses have risen, with violent crime increasing by 2.5 percent and murders by 4 percent in 2005. Guns play a significant role in many of these crimes.

Prison overcrowding is a particular problem, blamed for violence inside jails and for clashes based on race, in spite of the new prison facilities built in the states such as California.

Another major problem that the commission exposed was the inadequacy of medical care for prisoners. As a result of poverty, substance abuse and years of poor health care, prisoners as a group are much less healthy than the average American, but congress has denied Medicaid and Medicare coverage for all inmates.

There has been an attempt to develop standards in prison. The American Correctional Association set up framework but less than half of all prisons have become accredited, with only a tiny fraction of local jails taking up the proposals.

As the commission report states, one of the major forces in penal reform has been the number of lawsuits brought by individuals or by groups seeking penal reform. More recently, this method of reform has been sharply curtailed if not eliminated and the commission urges changes in federal law that will permit prisoners to have their claims adjudicated by a tribunal outside of the prison system.

One of the key issues that the commission highlights is the need for a greater transparency and accountability in the prison system. Most jails keep the press out of their facilities; the courts have not defined any right by the press or the public to visit prisons; and prison staff do not like to be visible to the press. ⑦

There are gaps in the commission report. It has little to say about women, juvenile offenders or education for prisoners. Nor does it focus on spiritual values and what prison officials may communicate to inmates.

The new report may have some impact on public opinion. People want certainty, predictability and severity in the way the nation treats those convicted of crimes. Corporate offenders receive little sympathy. These individuals are highly educated and have the assistance of eminently qualified lawyers.

But people also have little sympathy for the 19 year old black man who drops out of school, takes to drugs and engages in a serious felony and they do not understand the futility of sending him to prison for five to ten years. Well over half of such men will return to a life of crime.

One of the purposes of incarceration is to act as a correctional institution, but that intention has almost disappeared from America's penal system. Instead society seeks retribution. There is little consideration of reform or rehabilitation, or in deed for the needs of some two to three million children of these inmates, many of whom have to live with relatives or in foster homes.

Around 95% of all inmates return to society but most have not learned any new skills during their incarceration. Those who have mental problems do not know how to get help. And in a minority of states (mostly in the south) former felons are denied the right to vote for the rest of their lives.

Reading this report, one is tempted to think about death row, which it does not address, and where 3,200 prisoners languish. It is part of a system that brutalizes people, destroy the self-esteem of persons charged with crimes and demonstrates a pattern of cruel conduct to the nations of the world.

⑧

Will the new report have some impact? In the last 25 years American public opinion has moved towards an attitude of unforgiveness to criminals, a view that may contain elements of racism and even of vengeance. The new report on prisons quietly challenges that attitude but there is no reliable way of telling. The hostility to criminals, particularly those involved in drugs and robbery, is deep and abiding. At the same time one can only hope that the problems exposed in this report will cause the American people to persuade their leaders to bring about substantial changes. Such changes will be popular if they reduce substantially the cost of keeping over two million people in prison.

The United States is a country filled with wonderful aspirations. But it is also a nation that has made terrible mistakes. Americas present treatment of its prisoners may in the generations to come be deemed to be one of its worst mistakes.

Richard W. Dyches, K68728  
Dixon Correctional Center  
2600 N. Brinton Ave.  
Dixon, IL 61021-9532

A copy of this 126-page report may be obtained by writing to the Commission on Safety and Abuse in Americas Prisons, 601 Thirteenth Street, N.W., Suite 1150, Washington, DC 20005

Tired of being stepped on?

One of the challenges today is to exist in a world in which you have no real control over your destiny. Our options are limited depending on demographics of ethnicity, gender, and wealth (or

lack of). In conjunction with “the system” as it stands, we also must contend with cultural trends that negate our independence and interest in freedom from the ruling class.

9

In certain sectors of society, generations have survived on welfare; this being a trend in the particular family or community. It takes an individual in that particular family or community to “think outside the box” and break from that trend. The next greater challenge for that individual is to set a new trend.

Using the analogy of welfare, our societies parallel is the trend in which the masses rely on the government-not for public aid, but for interpretation of facts (i.e. the media), interpretation of reality (i.e. academics), policy making, decision making, and settlement of disputes.

If we can reason as a people that it is wrong to live off, or rely on the government for food, clothes, and shelter, then we should also be able to reason that it is equally self destructive, “lazy”, and wrong to rely on the government for social welfare.

The youth are faced with the tedious task of breaking the trend and setting a new trend. The Hip Hop community came under attack for its self-initiated “stop snitching” campaign.

First the fact that this was a self determined initiative by the community, it conflicted with the norm because the community is expected to leave the policy making to the aristocrats. Secondly, the particular determination, that snitching should end, conflicts with the cultural structure in which Americans exist.

We are expected to provide whatever information we know about each other to the government, spy on each other, eavesdrop, and settle all of our disputes through mediation of the government.

With respect to the former, if we are going to do the jobs of the CIA, FBI, and local police, then why are we paying them our tax dollars? If we are expected to volunteer, then they should exist as

a volunteer agency. A community servant works as a service to the community, a mercenary is a hired gun. The military and law enforcement are mercenaries that are paid generously to ignore the "Rule" of the ruling class. Unfortunately, they are paid with our hard earned tax dollars.

10

With respect to the latter, suing each other and calling the police on each other to settle disputes has led to the outright destruction of our community and respect for each other's existence as neighbors. It has deteriorated our social skills and ability to deal with each other. If we can't respect or earn the respect of our fellows then we have a problem that the law simply can't solve. Each community has its own unique problems which only it can solve.

Prison is not the answer. Self-respect and respect for others has never been instilled by the penal (prison) system. In fact, the penal system breeds predators. If you are not one going in, chances are you'll be one coming out. And calling the police only adds to the already disproportionate number of citizens incarcerated or murdered by officers.

Another move that citizens have made towards breaking the social welfare trend is the remarkable efforts to clean up after the exploitation of the 9<sup>th</sup> ward during hurricane Katrina. Citizens are continuing to be a part of the cleanup effort, though unfortunately, their efforts

alone are not enough. As volunteers, community organizations, and residents scramble to put their lives back together in the shadows, the government and corporate America have been focusing on restoring the "more important" parts of New Orleans such as the French Quarter and Garden District. (11)

According to a report in the Daily Reveille of Louisiana State University, 185 million dollars was spent on restoring the New Orleans superdome alone (116 million came from FEMA), 60 million went to restoring the Morial convention center, and 37 million into a new parking garage for luxury cruise boats. All this extravagance going on while many displaced citizens can't return home because that money didn't go to the restoration of their communities.

Why should we carry on with this trend of relying on the government when we are only left at the bottom of their shoe like bubble gum?

If you are tired of being stepped on, become a trend setter. The power is in the people.

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Free

PO Box

Letter to Boston ABC,

Dear Comrades,

At this time I will still refer to you as my comrades, until you show me otherwise. My name is Coyote. I have started up the ABC prison chapter in Nevada with the support of Anthony Rayson of South Chicago ABC, Burning River ABC and Ryan of Houston ABC. I am an Anarchist and member of the ABC. I am *your* comrade.

(12)

Recently, I was made aware of the 5 paged letter that Boston ABC—you guys—drafted up, in regards to the recent ABCN gathering. I have read your proposal on page 4, that addresses the desire for prisoners to be involved with ABC, as well as addressing the need for prisoners' groups and activism to be supported.

It says that you are not offering network status to prisoners or prison groups. Who made this decision may I ask? And when you say "we", who is "we"? Boston ABC? Or ABCN as a whole? What is the reason behind your decision to not offer network status to prisoners?

If I may, I would like to offer my humble opinion on this report. You say that you stand in solidarity with those oppressed by the state. Do you know what solidarity is? Solidarity is getting involved with the people who struggle behind enemy lines, getting involved in our lives, getting involved in our struggles, because we all share the common struggles of government oppression, regardless of what side of the fence we are on. We are all up against the same enemy. If you were to help us get organized in here, if you were to help us get politicized in here, and if we were able to get organized with our comrades on the outs, then we can get things done. We would be moving in the right direction: closer to prison abolition.

You say that you actively seek to abolish the institutionalized slavery of the prison industrial complex. How do you actively

seek to do that? By putting out a newsletter two times a year? That's far from actively doing anything to abolishing anything. Take a look at the "A's" in Spain and they can show you what "actively" truly means.

13

A "twice a year newsletter" in my humble opinion, is a step backwards, not forwards. Ten years ago, a newsletter would've been a very effective tool in raising awareness. But today, it's just not enough. Look at all of the newsletters that are out today. They do play a small role in the cause, but have little impact on making any difference in the situation that prisoners face. By putting out this "twice a year newsletter", and cutting prisoners off from being able to network and organize themselves in prison, you are taking this movement ten years backwards.

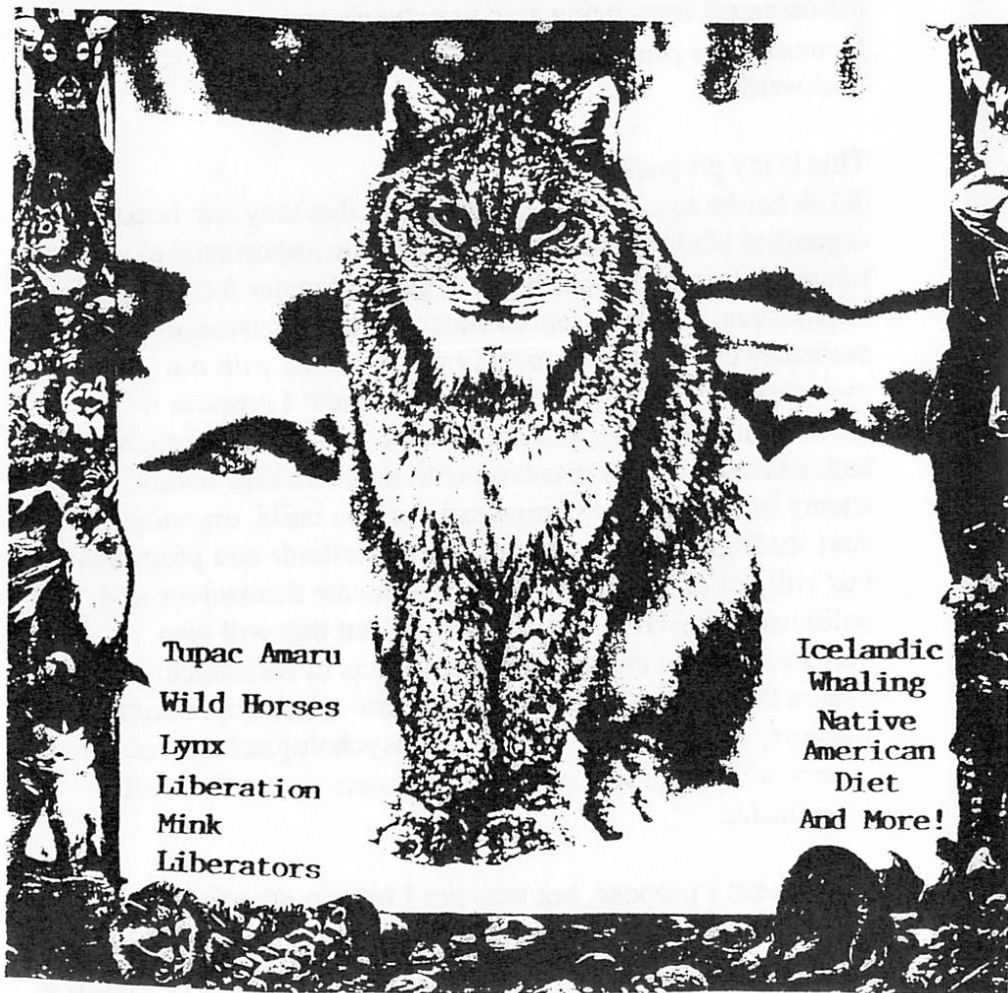
This is my proposal:

Work harder to politicize prisoners, so that they can become organized while behind enemy lines. The importance of prisoners being politicized and organized under these circumstances is an essential component of resistance. Without comrades on the streets, to truly get involved with our everyday struggles in here, we are doomed! I propose a movement where the comrades on the outs become organized, engaged and actively involved with the comrades behind enemy lines. Help the comrades in prison build, organize and start study groups and other effective methods and programs that will not only help prisoners re-educate themselves and politicize themselves while in prison, but that will also motivate them to engage in essential acts of resistance; that will inspire them to build themselves up into educated, Anarchist warriors, while fighting against the psychological oppression of incarceration; that will motivate prisoners to tear the walls down inside.

That's what I propose, but who am I but a motherfucker who lives this shit, breaths this shit, and eats this shit every day, in the trenches, behind enemy lines, right? Do you know what it's like to live in one of these cages day in and day out? The

been in a maximum security prison? Does he know what this shit is like? To be connected to prisoners in a real way is to be connected to the struggle in a real way. A newsletter is good, but it's not good enough. Your proposal suggests that ABCN minimizes their involvement with prisoners. If you want a *real* movement for prisoners, then give us the tools to run it ourselves. I'm speaking of a movement *for* prisoners ran *by* prisoners, because I don't believe that you truly share our concerns. Either that or you just truly don't understand what we are going through in these prisons.

I would like to hear from you. I will be here, engaged in every day activism, even while I sit in a cell, and even from behind enemy lines, because the struggle never ends.



Tupac Amaru  
Wild Horses  
Lynx  
Liberation  
Mink  
Liberators

Icelandic  
Whaling  
Native  
American  
Diet  
And More!

When kingdom come, they're not coming for me, unless they come hunting for me, but ill be all the way underground by then, like a worm trying to bore a hole from one side of the earth to the other. Campaigns and raids and guerilla tactics, we survive by putting theory into practice and were not evil but we choose to live backwards. Not the opposite of good, but the opposite of government oppression. Let the kingdom come if it shall, let the kingdom come if it must, we sing out songs and sing them loud and if it comes for us, the guns we trust will be the guns we bust, before we disappear in the dust, far under the earth's crust, living crusty, cuz were down to earth like that.

When kingdom come, you can fight or run, you can shine like the sun, float like the moon, from midnight to the afternoon, there ain't no room for us, nothing but doom for us. Shadows fall and disappear into the cracks, souls blow away in the breeze, while we slip away and disappear into the trees.

When kingdom come, thou shall be done, all or none, grab your guns and look out for number one. They can crucify me if they can catch me, pound stakes into my wrists until blood collects into my fist, but when I die I am not coming back, and until then, I'll snatch that bible out of their hand and beat e'm with it until they're souls are blue and black. Ill take the bible and burn it, paint my face with the ashes, advance, defend, attack.

When kingdom come, we will steal our daily bread and pass it out to those who haven't been fed and I don't know what you've read or what the preacher said, but around here we tread on thin thread, and around here we honor our dead, we remember the hearts that broke and the flesh that bled, we reach out to those in need, and to those who ache, and if the people in power and the people with money want to call us the wretched of the earth, then that's their mistake.

When the sun comes, all will shine, when the rain falls, all will be done, when kingdom come you better run, but until then, try to do unto others and you'd want to be done.

Clara  
Boston ABC  
Boston MA 02123

16

Dear Clara and everyone:

I received and circulated your letter of August 23<sup>rd</sup> to all in the Conditions Factory. Reaching a consensus, I wrote a response and the feedback on it was that it was not blunt enough. So this is our response. Blunt.

We disagree with your assessment that we misunderstood the PAN proposal. We read it. It says what it says. Prisoners will not be offered network status. So beyond the question of your intentions, as good as they may legitimately be, and despite the rationale for this decision, as based on logistics as it may be, the end result is what it is. There is no new criterion for network status: you must not be a prisoner. Prisoners need not apply. No more reindeer games for us. That the end result. Period.

Our conclusions were in no way influenced by Evil Antony. His response was a string of colorful profanity, big on entertainment value, rather short on analysis. We do not yet know if he agrees with our analysis. If he does, then we chalk that up to great minds think alike.

As for PAN itself, we have no problem with it. It's a brilliant idea. It's my understanding that Patrick (Liberty ABC) came up with it and, speaking for myself here, I love Patrick like a brother. We take issue with the ABCN excluding prisoners from network status. We contend it is a terrible precedent. We believe that the policy will not last; it does, we contend the ABCN as a relevant body will not last, that by excluding prisoners from the most effective means of self-organizing on recognized, equal terms, the ABCN has betrayed itself. You have compromised with convenience at the expense of principles.

I once spent 144 days in the hole, 44 on hunger strike, 17 of that on a hygiene strike and my security status was raised because I was accused of "trying to disrupt the government of the State of Ohio". For my political activities and beliefs, and investigator told me I was the most dangerous man locked up in the Ohio prison system. When they sent their thugs to beat me down with violence (when nothing else deterred me), they ground my face in the floor, leaving scars, and shipped me to the nuthouse to hide me. I had my writings sent to Patrick (then at Houston) for safe-keeping.

(17)

Please do not attempt to explain "logistical inconveniences" to me. I have experienced them in living color. And I am willing to experience them again and again.

You wrote that you were not aware that we or Nevada ABC Prison Chapter considered ourselves part of the ABCN. You write that there were no report-backs. Doesn't anyone read their own newsletter? February, 2007, pages 16-18. Coyote even signed off, "Nevada ABC Prison Chapter." Since, we of the Conditions Factory have submitted 2 rather lengthy and detailed report-backs as the Conditions Factory; we do not know if they were included in network newsletters, however, because we never received copies.

Look, Clara. Were not mad. You guys have every right to make this mistake if you want to. It doesn't really impact us in any practical way. Yesterday, we were the Conditions Factory tomorrow, we'll still be the Conditions Factory. We'll still do the same work. We'll still collaborate on projects like Last Act of the Circus Animals, which has gone global now with a review on London of OUR work, Conditions Factory work. Last Act is spreading to every corner of the prison system.

While others are making coffee, we're making revolution. You guys have effectively kicked the Conditions Factory out of the ABCN. That says more about the ABCN than it says about the Conditions Factory. And we predict that in the not-so-distant future, the ABCN will look back on this moment as the point where the ABCN jumped the shark, where you squandered your relevance and credibility and robbed yourselves of an opportunity. (18)

We are willing to work with anybody as equals, as sisters and brothers. Our only requirement is that you must be willing to pick up a pen, a modem, a detonator or a machine gun. I have a label taped on my typewriter: "WARNING: This machine kills tyrants." Whether the ABCN recognizes us as a circle, a square, or a triangle, we are in the business of killing tyrants. We will work with anyone and will provide our publications to anyone willing to distribute. We have not changed our relationship to you. We will still send our materials to Burning River if they are still talking to us, and to Liberty if Patrick doesn't hate us, and to Anthony and Coyote and Kansas Mutual Aid and on and on. We simply maintain this position: The ABCN is fucking up.

As a final note—and it is really academic at this point—you contend that Anthony violated internal policy when he sent a copy of the PAN proposal to Coyote and me. We find this confusing. As Anthony read the ABCN newsletters and was validly under the assumption that Nevada ABC and the Conditions Factory were both PART of the ABCN, why would he not provide us a copy of the proposal policy for our review and feedback? Everyone else received a copy, didn't they?

As the proposal supposed to circulate among all ABCN chapters and collectives except for those about to get the ax? I think not. So, if Anthony had not sent those to us, he would have been—given his belief in our legitimate status—betraying us, keeping silent while we were purged, so to speak. What is all the more confusing is how Anthony was wrong for sending the same thing you sent in your letter. The only difference is

that Anthony sent it before we were stripped naked and tossed down the staircase. You delivered a copy after gravity deposited us at the bottom of the stairs.

(19)

Anthony is often stubborn, difficult and obtuse. He often flies off the handle. He has a tendency to not play well with others. In this case, what he did was honorable and he sent us the same thing you sent us. Just something to think about before anyone decides to run around cyberspace with his head on a spike.

All the personal and factionalized finger-pointing aside, the real deal is this: The ABCN has permanently purged prisoners from membership on an equal basis with everyone else by implementing this proposal. That's the real deal. Everything else is water over the bridge.

We in the Conditions Factory have spent all the time on such a debate as we can spare. We are now collaborating on our manifesto, "To Smash the Gods", which we believe will have a lasting impact on Anarchist theory and practice and will surpass Last Act of the Circus Animals as our contribution to a worldwide revolution to topple the existing order.

How ironic that we take our name from a quote by George Jackson ("Where the conditions for revolution are not present, they must be manufactured..."), who was never purged from the Black Panthers due to the logistical inconvenience of consulting him in prison.

Freedom,

Sean Swain A243-205  
For The Conditions Factory

**Question #14) In your writings, conversations with people and in your letters, you are always saying that we as people are so atomized. Please elaborate on this theory of yours and tell me how are we atomized and what does it mean to be atomized? What are your suggestions on how we can start taking control over our own lives?** (20)

**Answer:**

Well, atoms are a basic building block of matter. Complex molecules full of all kinds of atoms are broken down to individual atoms. It also means taking water and turning it into a fine mist. But the way I mean it is more related to how people comport themselves. We are loners. We keep to ourselves. We live alone a lot and we keep to ourselves, even in a crowd. Many people wear iPods and shut out all other influences, whether from other humans or whatever.

It means we have broken down the complex relationships and every individual is left to fend for themselves. We see people in their own little worlds all the time. They may be speaking to another person on their cell phone in the midst of a crowd, oblivious to the other humans around them.

People don't gather around a coffee shop to discuss the day's news or to share in each other's company. They go to their computers and get it on a screen. Even children sit in front of a screen and play games, often by themselves, transfixed by unreal images clashing and "battling" among themselves. So few go out and play together outside much anymore.

The older couch potatoes have cable T.V. where hundreds of stations are available to occupy their time and even if others are in the same room, nobody says a word. Even the "games" children play are completely orchestrated and regulated by adults. Pick-up games are a thing of the past...

Cameras are everywhere and people don't make conversation with "strangers" as if other people are a dangerous thing. Work spaces have little cubicles, where it is just one worker and his or her computer. Prisoners are sometimes housed singly, or doubly or in overcrowded dorms, which ruins and distorts what healthy humans relations should be like, too.

You can see it in the all the thousands of tiny little groups fighting for social justice – but not with each other, but only in little groups. We live in neighborhoods and don't even know our neighbors – and many don't even want to know them! Out in the suburbs, they don't even build sidewalks anymore, so children have nowhere to ride their bikes, play hopscotch, walk or do anything other than in their own yard. They must be driven in cars – even to their schools.

And, it's psychological, too. So many people are on all kinds of prescription drugs (and non-prescription ones) and "cope" with life while fighting with their demons inside their own skulls, without any knowledge or input from others. Alienation, despair, loneliness, hopelessness – these awful psychological conditions are pandemic in this country. We don't know who to turn to trust anybody with our problems, afraid that instead of relief, things will get even worse.

With such a crumbling economy, people are afraid to confide with others of their huge amount of debt. While many have no job, others must work two or more jobs to "make ends meet." Meanwhile, the days and years slip by and nothing is being accomplished from all this effort.

We hear an endless litany of madness every night on the news. The latest horror story is the triple murder of Jennifer Hudson's family. And yet, where is the inspiration to deal with it all? Where is the modern day Malcolm X or Martin Luther King, Jr.? We're stuck to settle for Jesse Jackson and Barack Obama...

We see the whole world in an accelerating meltdown and those responsible (industry and the governments who coddle them) are not willing to do anything of significance about it all. All we see are more walls, more cameras, more prisoners, more wars, more violence and madness – more dreadful reality that further makes people draw away from society and into their own little worlds. (21)

It's a surrendering of our future, really. If more than two people are seen on a street corner or in a store, they are suspected of "gang (criminal) activity."

We're constantly goaded to do (buy) things for ourselves. The specter of "socialism" is forever shoved into our faces as a horrible thing if someone even mentions collective responsibility or projects that would benefit us all. Thanks a lot "communism" for being so horrible and totalitarian that this is easy for capitalists to do! Capitalism is extolled as the best system, that wars are unavoidable, blah, blah, blah. We are all on our own, except for our immediate families or maybe, the canned "community" that a church pretends to offer.

Unions aren't what they used to be, people are often on their own. Marriage is a fragile institution, many children live in houses with one (or no) parents. A piece of paper and an expensive ceremony don't really help a couple cope with all the stress life in this society creates. Nobody has been taught how to function in a relationship. Many parents are languishing in prison and many ex-prisoners are haunted by their experiences. A lot of people live day to day and paycheck to paycheck. The last month has seen two trillion dollars vanish from the ledgers of retirement funds! Once again, the rug has been pulled from under many people. So, everywhere people turn for help and the sustaining nurturing

of others has been shut in their face. They've been burned by their attempts at working or socializing with other people and groups and feel stranded.

To top it off, people have a dreadful understanding of their own selves and feel vulnerable, scared, anxious and lonely in their own company. They have never learned to tap into themselves and build a positive relationship with themselves, develop their talents and interests and positively engage others with an outgoing, strong demeanor with no strings attached. Too often, when people do outreach to others it is because of need or weakness or desperation – or they are scheming on them for something. 22

The truth will set you free and the truth about this problem of atomization of people is to understand that there are reasons why this state of affairs is so. When people are divided and broken down so minutely that they *want* to just be left alone, a criminal government such as the Bush-Cheney cabal can lie, loot and murder with unmitigated gall and enormity. There otherworldly crimes remain basically unchallenged.

It's why they pit prisoners against each other all the time, too. They don't want people to realize their strength lies in self-actualization combined with numbers of people working in concert for common goals.

How do we overcome atomization? We need the same approach that is proven successful in overcoming all other obstacles and problems. First, we have to face the problem and realize it is a problem. Next, we have to resolve to desire to overcome the problem. Then, we have to deal with the problem. This means learning about it, researching it, listening to the advice of others, who we deliberately seek out, trying out these ideas in our lives, examine our patterns of behavior, identify bad habits and make ourselves stop those behaviors and replace them with positive behaviors. Again, it is a question of will and determination – a desire to want to improve our lives and a hope that our efforts will pay off. Our brains are our biggest friends and they can figure out the solution to any problem – if we give them the go ahead to work on them and if we allow ourselves to trust their better judgment. All of our negative thoughts about ourselves can be boxed and shelved and put in the past. They don't count – unless we refuse to transcend them.

Results take time and often seem to lag way behind what our efforts, in our anxiousness, feel they should. It takes a leap of believing that the concepts of anarchism, really, really do actually work, once put into practice. Mutual aid, voluntary cooperation, the innate humanism within us all, solidarity – these are the tools that can bring us contentment, fulfillment and happiness. By trying to do the right thing, by trying to help ourselves grow into our potential selves, by trying to help share what we have learned and discovered with others, these things are what has always

**brought people the sense of self and community that the highly social animal we are (humans), have always thrived amidst.**

**Being bullied by fear and lies and threats and hopelessness doesn't even provide safety. We cocoon ourselves and it just makes us miserable. Even if we are safe at home by ourselves, we still fear what's "out there."**

**We can blossom into strong and productive individuals but the vague fear drummed into us since early childhood needs to be extracted and stomped to death, completely. True, there are many dangers out there, but handcuffing ourselves with fear and inertia, has no effect on those dangers. We just live our lives in ignorance and misery instead of confidence and wonder. Direct action is needed to deal with this problem, just like all the others.**

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## **I SEE DEAD PEOPLE**

I am like coal, in the sense that I see dead people. Not in the context of their being inanimate or devoid of life, but rather what is intended by the term "DEAD" is lacking any feelings or sensitivity.

I see dead people; in a place where everyday is a virtual vision of Halloween in prison...as almost everyone wears a mask. They trick individuals to believe they were "this" or "that" on the street, so they con with no regard for consequences, "Treating" themselves to the property of others, tasting the sweetness of bitter fruit!

I see dead people, black, white...red people, in the grips of racial pride, under the guise of being simply proud of ethnicity! Zombies, eyes wide but vacant, where the walk to the mess hall is like being trapped in some weird documentary by West Craven! Graves in the form of bunk beds, where the mentally sick attempt to sleep away time, blind to reality day by day. Spiritual decay and distress eats at what's left of frailty.

I see dead people, haunted by their own mistakes! Followed by the demons of desire and lust, and no such thing as trust do they trust! The saying goes, "it's just us", plus who will awake the dead? Perhaps the boss, whose carried his own cross...buried alive inside, crucified to these walls.

I see dead people; evil disguised as good...a matrix of darkness where the heartless roam freely. I wonder, will tougher laws and prime politicians resurrect the dead? Will programs and pseudo restorative justice programs resurrect the dead?

I think "I" am dead people! I now see myself in the mirror image of chains and pains...socially removed and almost dormant; like some disease, afraid to infect others with my B.P. (borderline pessimism). Awake me from my sleep. Convince me I've dreamt it all! Tell me it's some kind of butterfly effect...and that neglect really isn't real. Release me from my grave (i.e. prison).

Already enough said. I will leave you now, while I count myself among the dead!!

Written by Keith Burley EC-0000

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# Inmates' voting rights restored

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■ **ACLU: Court decision vindicates more than 100,000 Californians**

**By Josh Richman**

STAFF WRITER

County jail inmates serving time for felonies or on felony probation have a right to vote, the state Court of Appeal ruled Thursday.

The state constitution's article II, section 2 bars from voting only those in state prison or on parole for a felony conviction, a three-judge panel concluded, ordering the Secretary of State's office to inform county clerks, superior court clerks and voter registrars.

"We are thrilled with the court's ruling vindicating the voting rights of more than 100,000 Californians," said Maya Harris, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California. "We need more people voting now, less, and the court's ruling makes that possible."

Amy Thoma, spokeswoman for Secretary of State Bruce McPherson, said her office is pleased that it has been clarified and informed counties of the ruling. Thursday, more formal directions will follow next week.

Please see **VOTE-Metro 2**

# Court reinstates voting rights for jail inmates

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## VOTE

The Secretary of State's office for years had interpreted the constitution's article III section 4 in a manner consistent with the appeal bars change. But the office reversed its position in December 2005 after requesting and receiving an opinion from the attorney general's office. It told local officials the constitutional voting ban also applies to people serving county jail time for felonies, including those serving that time as a probation condition.

The League of Women Voters of California, represented by ACLU and the Oakland-based Social Justice Law Project, sued for the inmates' right to vote. They went right to the Court of Appeal rather than starting in Superior Court, involving case law that says voting rights can fall among issues of great public importance that must be resolved promptly.

By focusing solely on the word "imprisoned," and on a dictionary definition of that term, the attorney general's opinion ignored a critical distinction between the situation of persons confined to jail as a condition of felony probation and that of persons imprisoned in state prison. Associate Justice William Stein wrote in the ruling. The former are under the jurisdiction of the court. The latter are not.

The Attorney General's opinion also ignored decades of judicial construction without regard for the history of the constitutional provision or the purpose of the 1974 amendment that contained the modern wording, he wrote.

Presiding Justice James Marchlano and Associate Justice Douglas Swager agreed.

Contact Josh Fichman at [jfichman@angnewspapers.com](mailto:jfichman@angnewspapers.com) or 208-8428. Read the Political Blotter at [www.ibabuzz.com/politics](http://www.ibabuzz.com/politics).

By Sharon Danann  
Cleveland

Four hundred seven prisoners took over a portion of a prison in Lucasville, Ohio, for 11 days in April 1993. When it was over, one guard and nine prisoners had been killed, making it the longest prison uprising with loss of life in recorded U.S. history.

It seemed that only Ohioans were riveted to the drama as it unfolded. This was partly because the events in Lucasville took place at the same time that 83 Branch Davidians were being incinerated by Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents in Waco, Texas.

What held the Lucasville rebellion together was unity between Black and white prisoners, as reported by Staughton Lynd in "Lucasville: The Untold Story of a Prison Uprising" and elsewhere.

George Skatzes, at that time a member of the racist Aryan Brotherhood, was approached by a Black prisoner within the first hours of the takeover because he had been known to mediate disputes among prisoners. White and Black prisoners were on opposite sides of the gym and the atmosphere was tense.

Skatzes, who had never been a public speaker, put his arm around the Black man

and said to the assembled inmates: "This is against the administration. We are all in this together. They are against everyone in here who's blue [the color of the prisoners' uniforms]. ... If they come in here, they're going to kill all of us. They're going to kill this man and me, no matter what color we are." **26**

Later, when Skatzes was out in the prison yard as a spokesperson, he announced: "We are oppressed people; we have come together as one. We are brothers. ... We are a unit here, they try to make this a racial issue. It is not a racial issue. Black and white alike have joined hands in SOCF [Southern Ohio Correctional Facility] and become one strong unit."

The Ohio State Highway Patrol officers who entered portions of the prison after the siege told afterward of signs and slogans written on the walls: "Black and White Together," "Black and White Unity," "Convict Unity" and "Convict Race." This forging of unity across racial barriers adds to the reasons why the Ohio system of (in)justice has been so determined to make an example of the Lucasville Five.

The imam of the Sunni Muslims, Siddique Abdullah Hasan, negotiated with prison authorities during the siege, as did another member of the Aryan Brotherhood, Jason Robb. Their efforts contributed to a negotiated settlement to the siege. This

## From 1993 to today

# Racial solidarity

settlement included a 21-point agreement that the warden had to sign, after which the remaining five hostages were released and prisoners came out in groups of 20. Their reward for preventing a bloodbath, ironically, is the death penalty.

Skatzes was also convicted and is on death row. Together the five prisoners falsely convicted in connection with the deaths that took place during the uprising are known as the Lucasville Five. The other two of the Five are Black, so the Five reflect the make-up of the prison population in Ohio: roughly 60 percent Black and Latin@ and 40 percent white.

The solidarity among the Lucasville Five has held strong. As reported by Lynd, they share legal materials and are actively concerned for each other's health. They have gone on hunger strikes together to protest the conditions of their confinement.

One of the fasts was accompanied by a list of demands that started with proper medical treatment for George Skatzes. After about another week, only Skatzes and Hasan were still fasting. The prison approached both individually to state that the concerns would be addressed.

But neither of them would eat until told directly by the other that he was ready to eat again. Hasan said: "I chose to stay on the fast to let them know that I was down

with George's struggle, too, and I would not sit quiet and let the system mess over him. ... [T]hey got the message and know that we are one."

The Lucasville Five's convictions are based entirely on perjured testimony extracted from other prisoners under threat that they would be sent up on capital charges if they didn't sculpt the facts to the prosecution's liking. A growing number of supporters are calling for their convictions to be overturned and them to be set free.

Messages of solidarity, along with stamps and envelopes to facilitate responses, can be sent to S.A. Hasan (#R130-559), Keith Lamar (#317-117), Jason Robb (#308-919), James Were (#173-245) at the Ohio State Penitentiary, 878 Coitsville-Hubbard Rd., Youngstown, OH 44505-4635 and to George Skatzes (#173-501), P.O. Box 788, Mansfield, OH 44901-0788.

*Hasan is the co-sponsor of a Web site, [prisonersolidarity.org](http://prisonersolidarity.org) and also has a Web site at [www.ohiodeathrow.com/carlos\\_sanders.htm](http://www.ohiodeathrow.com/carlos_sanders.htm). Keith Lamar has written a book, "Condemned," which can be obtained from his address above. Much of the material for this article is derived from Staughton Lynd's "Lucasville: The Untold Story of a Prison Uprising." For more information, go to [www.workers.org/2006/us/lucasville-five-1026/](http://www.workers.org/2006/us/lucasville-five-1026/)*

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# threatens

# prison officials



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