Torture is as American as Cherry Pie!

By Tom Big Warrior

In one of the earliest journals of Colonial America, Capt. David DeVries of the New Netherland Colony describes in lurid detail how on the night of February 25th, 1643, Dutch soldiers and civilians launched an unprovoked attack on friendly Lenape Indians camped at Corlaer's Hook and across the Hudson River at Pavonia (Jersey City) massacring hundreds of them. On the following day, they returned with 30 prisoners and many severed heads. The prisoners, who had survived the massacre, were tied to stakes, had their skin peeled off with sharp knives, and were forced to eat their own flesh, while the good ladies of the colony made sport by kicking the severed heads around the Bowling Green.

It seems Euro-Americans have never tired of the sport of torturing Indians, as demonstrated by the June 7th, 2005 assault and torturing of Lenape Chief, Iron Thunderhorse, the Medicine Chief of the Red Heart Warriors Society and a political prisoner at the Polunski Unit in Livingston, Texas: Ranking officers of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), attacked this elderly and legally blind inmate while he was attempting to go to the chow-hall. They knocked the glasses and UV shields from his face and sprayed chemical pepper spray directly in his eyes. They proceeded to spray him all over with the chemical irritant, kicking him and wrenching his crippled arm behind his back.

For weeks, Iron had been denied entry into the chow-hall, or any food at all, as the TDCJ was attempting to starve him into complying with an order to submit to a haircut, despite the fact that a federal court had recently upheld that his civil rights were being violated. This was the latest outrage in a struggle that has been going on for almost thirty years.

"I suffer from corneal dystrophy and have cataracts and open angle glaucoma, my corneas no longer produce tears," Iron wrote in a complaint over the June 7th attack, explaining the excruciating pain he was in when he was at last taken to the medical unit. "Lt. Lawrence and Sgt. Sheffield refused to allow the duty nurse to conduct a proper PHD exam....Officers refused her admonishment to un-handcuff me due to excruciating pain in [my] shoulder." Iron had a pass, repeatedly renewed by doctors since 1992, prohibiting his being cuffed behind his back due to his crippled arm. This was confiscated after the attack.

"Officers refused to allow the nurse to flush my eyes with water or otherwise decontaminate my person from the pepper spray. The OC pepper spray saturated both eyes, face, head, ear canals, neck, torso, arms, palms, buttocks and thighs. Officers kept saying, 'LET HIM BURN!'"

Iron also suffers from rhinitis and sebhorric dermatitis, both of which are specifically mentioned on the precautions list for use of OC pepper spray. This was known by the officers prior to this premeditated attack, and Iron had reported that he had been repeatedly threatened with this type of assault. It was obvious that an allergic reaction was taking place to the pepper spray, yet Iron was prevented from showering until more than 12 hours later.

This torture is compounded by medical neglect. Iron suffers from high blood pressure, heart arrhythmia, sleep apnea, recurrent shingles and only has one functioning lung. All of these conditions were aggravated by the assault, yet his requests to see a doctor were not only denied, so were his regular prescribed medications for these conditions.

A veteran of the Vietnam War, Iron recounts: "My missions were to CAPTURE assigned targets, (as designated by the CIA spooks), and bring them back alive and kicking. I then turned them over to a group of Montagnard's we had helped train. I figured just capturing them exempted me from accountability,...and since Uncle Sam had turned the torture of these political prisoners over to the American-trained and groomed Montagnards, our hands were clean."❑

Rising Sun Press
PO Box 4362
Allentown, PA 18105

SOUTH CHICAGO
ABC ZINE DISTRO
PO BOX 721
HOMEWOOD, IL 60430

THE RED HEART WARRIOR

VOL. 5 NO. 2 SPRING '06



NEWSLETTER OF THE RED HEART WARRIORS SOCIETY

EDITORIAL

In order to keep up with the reality that we now have many members, nearly all of whom are indigent prisoners spread out throughout the country, we are going to have to reduce the size of our newsletter and keep it down to ten pages. We can't cover as many topics as we would like to, but we are going to try to cover the most important ones.

The fight for Native American spiritual rights in the iron houses of America will continue to be central to our work, but as red-hearted warriors, we must take on broader issues that affect more than ourselves. As a prison-based warrior society, we must build unity with other prisoners of all ethnic backgrounds and spiritual orientations in the fight for human rights and for justice for all prisoners.

In particular, we must promote the Red-Black Alliance between Native American and New Afrikan peoples and stand in solidarity against white racist oppression. And we must stand united as Native Americans with our Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters who have migrated north seeking a better life for themselves and their families. The border only exists in the minds of the Anglos. It does not divide our Native American peoples.

The U.S. penitentiary system is an extension of the Indian reservations and the slave plantations. According to the 13th Amendment, the status of prisoners is that of slaves. We must wage a determined effort to amend the 13th Amendment and abolish slavery in America. We must also struggle to restore voting rights to ex-felons and to all prisoners along with the status of "citizen." We say: "NO INCARCERATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION!"

We must demand that the federal, state, county and municipal prisons and jails get in compliance with the U.N.'s UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. We must demand the abolition of the racist death penalty and all forms of cruel and unusual punishment. We have the right to decent health care, nutrition, living conditions, exercise and hygiene.

We have the inalienable right to: LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS! These Natural Rights can only be restricted to comply with the security considerations necessitated by our condition of incarceration. The government does not have the right to deprive us of our lives by execution, abuse or neglect. Nor does it have the right to deprive us of liberty in terms of freedom of speech and communication, access to reading material and artistic and spiritual expression beyond the reasonable considerations of institutional security.

RIGHTS ARE NOT PRIVLIDGES! And we are not animals or slaves. WE MUST NOT BE TREATED AS SUCH! We have the right to fair compensation for our labor. We have the right to pursue our education and access to the means of rehabilitation. We have the right to reasonable access to maintain our relationships with our families and loved ones.

The Red Heart Warriors Society (RHWS) will unite with other prisoner and human rights groups to see that these things are adopted and implemented and to expose and demand correction of human rights abuses. We shall also struggle resolutely against criminal activity and the criminal mentality among our fellow prisoners. Creator intended us to be warriors and not parasites preying on the people. We will stand tall in the fight against all oppression!

Together with our allies, we shall: TRANSFORM THE IRON HOUSES OF OPPRESSION INTO SCHOOLS OF LIBERATION! And in as much as we are able we shall: TRANSFORM THE OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES INTO BASE AREAS OF CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REVOLUTION!

Crime and exploitation are not a product of Human Nature but of the unnatural socio-political-economic system that was imposed by colonialism: CAPITALISM. This has evolved into a global monster of monopoly corporate control eating up the people's rights and consciousness, reducing everything to a question of financial advantage for the monopoly capitalists who own or control nearly everything.

Against this we must rally the common people to create and restore PEOPLE'S POWER, and true government of the PEOPLE, by the PEOPLE, and for the PEOPLE, with LIBERTY and JUSTICE for all! This and nothing less is the duty of all true, red-hearted warriors. It is within this context we must work to restore our indigenous nations, or families and ourselves as stand up human beings.

As red-hearted warriors, we must dedicate ourselves to live lives of service to the people and to strive to be our people's pride. Most particularly we must strive to serve the interests of the generations yet unborn, to pass onto them our traditions and heritage and a world that will sustain and nurture many more generations to come.

MAY CREATOR STAND US TALL! - AH-HO!





"Native Heart" by Reynoldo Rodriguez

Prison Art Project
PO Box 31574
San Francisco, CA 94131-0574

Writers Wanted!

The Red Heart Warriors Society (RHWS) & The Black Brigade Will be publishing an anthology of prison writings by our members & supporters that will be entitled:

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Creator made us to be warriors. This is biologically determined. The very gifts that enable us to be strong warriors, strength of body, quickness of mind, and courage are exploited to turn us into "gangsta's" and "hoodlums." We are made into caricatures of what we were intended to be...not the real thing at all!

To be real, we must return to the ways of our warrior ancestors and their traditional spiritual orientation. We must let Creator stand us tall and help us to walk in balance on the Red Path of true warriors. When necessary, we must walk alone, when possible, we must unite as brothers and form warrior circles. Virtually any prison group can become a warrior's circle and help to transform the joint into a "School of Liberation." Every yard and cell block can become a classroom of higher learning.

Education is the key. Those with knowledge and understanding must share it with others. Lifers, who cannot get out, can school those who will. Those who come out can carry the "New School" into the neighborhoods and back onto the reservations. No matter how bad one has been, when turned to service to the people we can all be useful. We can be Giants!

The people who run the prisons talk about "corrections" and "rehabilitation," but it is all a scam. The only ones who care about rehabilitation are the prisoners themselves and their loved ones. The system is rigged to fail. People are expected to come out more demoralized and dehumanized then they went in. They are expected to re-offend and go right back in, or trip over some technical violation of parole placed in their path.

The reality is there are not enough decent jobs to go around. Globalization calls for exportation of the good jobs elsewhere and importation of cheap immigrant labor to depress wages in the service sector. That's why so many Americans are being incarcerated for longer prison terms. It has nothing to do with crime rates and everything to do with keeping the underclass down.

The only way to win is to stop playing their game and to turn the tables on our oppressors. Nobody can change a thing about the past. What's done is done! All we can do is determine what we are going to do today and what we aspire to become in the future. Why should we accept the label of our past misdeeds as an identity or put such on others? Pretty near everyone in prison did some pretty awful thing or things to get where they are, but why dwell upon it? Need it determine the rest of one's life?

We can be the sort of men whom others will respect and trust regardless of the start we made in life, if we decide to change our ways and walk a righteous path. We were all given the capability of living up to Creator's expectations.

Sometime you have to leave the path to find it, to fail in order to succeed. We were born in a sewer of exploitation where everything sacred is profaned and selfishness, insensitivity, ruthlessness and greed are promoted as virtues. We live in a world turned wrong-side up. No one on death row killed more people than Lee Iacoca, when with the stroke of a pen he eliminated the option of putting a safer gas tank on the Ford Pinto, and they proclaimed him "Man of the Year."

Compared to the crimes of the ruling class, all the offences of all the prisoners in America taken together pale by comparison, but they go scott free, or at worst get a slap on the wrist, no matter what their crimes, while the poor are executed or grow old in prison cells. But before there can be an accounting of true justice, the people must be united. Such unity does not fall from the sky, or occur as an instantaneous mystical happening, it must be built up gradually from below. A nation stands upon its warriors, and without them, a people have nothing.

America is not just a nation of prisons, where one in four of the incarcerated people in the world reside, it is a prison house of nations. First and foremost are the indigenous nations whose homelands are occupied. Then there is the nation of Africans in America, of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in America, and so on. All the nations in America, including the white colonial settler nation, must learn to stand together and to stand tall in opposition to all oppression. Warriors must lead the way!

We are all in the same boat. Our fates are intertwined. To have a future, we must wrest the wheel from Blind Greed and Selfish Ambition and put Reason in command. Who can understand this better than those whose personal lives have been wrecked upon the rocks? It is from within the bowels of the system of injustice, from those stripped of everything tangible, and struggling to retain their humanity and spirit, that hope for the future will be found. In the hard knocks school of prison and on the mean streets of poverty and desperation, the people will find their champions.

Let all who yearn for a day of liberation for mankind take a hand in consciously creating this school. Yes, one day we shall see the abolition of prisons, and of every form of oppression, but not without first raising up a tide of red-hearted warriors who, even under the gravest adversity, have learned how to be free.

Red Heart Warriors Society (RHWS)

Frank Little:

1/2 White, 1/2 Indian, All IWW

by Tom Big Warrior

"Better to go out in a blaze of glory than to give in. Either we're for this capitalist slaughterfest or we're against it. I'm ready to face a firing squad rather than compromise/...It's better to go down slugging!"

~ Frank Litt/e, 1917

Little is known about Frank Little's personal life. He was born in Illinois in 1879 or 1880, but was raised in Oklahoma. He was, some say, a Cherokee. His father was a doctor, and he attended collage in Oklahoma before becoming a hard rock miner in Colorado. In 1903, The Western Federation of Miners (WFM) hired him as an organizer. Two years later, the WFM and its President "Big Bill" Haywood, (who was also part Indian), became the main force, along with the Socialist Party leader, Eugene V. Debs, in founding the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). In 1906, Frank Little became an IWW organizer, and eight years later, he was elected to its General Executive Board.

Frank organized lumberjacks, metal miners, oilfield workers, dock workers and unskilled fruit-pickers, but he was best known for leading the IWW's free speech campaigns in places like Missoula, Fresno and Spokane, and he was a pioneer in the tactic of non-violent resistance.

When union organizers would be arrested for speaking in public, Frank and the IWW would come in, soap box on street corners, and fill the local jails until the right of free speech was recognized. He was once sentenced to 30 days for reading the Declaration of Independence on a street corner.

In Fresno, where he was arrested for public speaking, Frank told the judge, "Your jails and dungeons hold no terror for me." The judge sentenced him to solitary confinement on a diet of bread and water. This was in December of 1910, and the "Wobblies" kept getting arrested until the fight was won in March of 1911. Sometimes, he was assaulted by company-hired goons, and on one occasion, he was kidnapped by local businessmen and tortured for several days before he was rescued by striking dock workers. He gave a speech that afternoon.

Frank was a believer in direct action and doing things in a big way. In 1914, when he was elected to the General Executive Board, Little appealed to the Convention to form the Agricultural Workers Organization (AWO). On one occasion, the AWO formed an 800-mile long picket line.

On April 6, 1917, the U.S. entered World War I and announced that a draft would be implemented. Haywood and Little urged the General Executive Board to take a position of opposing the war and the draft, but too many of the Board members were intimidated by the wave of government and media hyped "war fever" sweeping the country. None-the-less, Little himself publicly spoke out against the war and helped to organize the Great Western Copper Strike, that stretched from Butte, Montana down to the Mexican border. Copper was vital to the war effort, and the capitalist press howled that it was "treasonous" for the miners to press their demands at this time. 3

In July of 1917, company-backed "Loyalty League" goons in Bisbee, AZ killed three strikers and herded 1,200 others into box cars, without food or water, and dumped them on the Mexican border at Columbus, NM. The Chicano, Indian, Anglo and Asian miners suffered greatly in the desert heat. On July 18th, Frank Little arrived in Butte, MT, where a decade earlier vigilantes had dynamited the local union hall. He was on crutches with his leg in a cast from a broken ankle he received in a car accident while in Bisbee. He set to work at once organizing the strike and authorized women to join the picket lines. He also spoke out explaining the imperialist nature of the war. He argued that all working men should refuse to join the army and fight on behalf of their capitalist oppressors. In the last speech before his death, he told the people of Butte, "I stand for the solidarity of labor."

After midnight, on the night of August 1st, six masked, armed men broke into his hotel room and dragged him from his bed. He was beaten, tied by a rope, and dragged behind their car to a railroad tressel, where they hung him with a note pinned to his body that said: "First and last warning."

As many as 6,800 people attended his funeral in Butte, the largest in the Montana history. His tombstone reads: "Slain by capitalist interests for organizing and inspiring his fellow men."

After that, the government unleashed J. Edgar Hoover and the worst anti-labor repression in American history. The IWW office in Chicago was among the first to be raided. IWW members were a particular target, and thousands were arrested and imprisoned. Others were deported, including "Big Bill" Haywood, who was sent to Russia, where he lived until he died and was buried with honors in the Kremlin Wall. Eugene Debs was imprisoned for speaking out against the draft, but he polled some 2 million votes in the next election.

Ralph Chaplin, one of the imprisoned IWW leaders, penned this tribute to his friend, Frank Little:

Mourn not the dead that in the cool earth lie - Dust unto dust -
The calm sweet earth that mothers all who die,
As all men must;
But rather mourn the apathetic throng -
The cowed and meek -
Who see the world's great anguish and its wrong -
And dare not speak! ❑

The Green Corn Rebellion

by Tom Big Warrior

The same day Frank Little was found hanging from a railroad tressel in Butte, Montana, a vigilante posse broke up a gathering of rebellious sharecroppers on Roasting Ears Hill, outside Sasakwa in his native Oklahoma. Southeastern Oklahoma was a stronghold of socialist sentiment. In 1916, the Socialist Party candidate for President, Eugene Debs, carried Pontotoc, Pottawatamie and Seminole counties.

In fact, Oklahoma had the largest per capita number of Socialists of any state, and the southeast was the stronghold of the Working Class Union (WCU), who were to the left of the Socialist Party. Composed primarily of poor white, Black and Indian sharecroppers and unemployed, the WCU had tried to join IWW, but it was turned down because the IWW did not consider them to be workers. The small fanners and sharecroppers were in fact peasants, whose fortunes were tied to the price of cotton, like others of their class throughout the South.

The WCU had been founded by a preacher in Arkansas. It had its counterparts in other places, like the Farmers and Laborers Protective Association (FLPA), which was founded in Oklahoma, but had 197 chapters and numbered some 10,000 members in Texas. It also had chapters in Georgia. Like the WCU, these organizations were tri-racial in composition, socialist in orientation, and prepared to resist the draft by force of arms.

The gathering of armed WCU members on Roasting Ears Hill were not exactly sure how to proceed with their rebellion. The consensus seemed to be to march on Washington D.C. and confront "Old Slick" (Woodrow Wilson), who had run for re-election in 1916 on the slogan, "He Kept Us Out of War," [footnote: Wilson had already secretly committed to enter the war on England's side, (through the House-Grey memorandum), eight months before the 1916 election.] gathering forces as they marched through the South. Armed with shotguns and squirrel rifles, they were celebrating the traditional Indian Green Com Feast in this traditional gathering place while awaiting reinforcements. The rebels from western Oklahoma had delayed their rising because of bad weather. Meanwhile, teams had gone out to put up posters stating: "Now is the time to rebel against this war with Germany boys. Get together boys and don't go. Rich man's war - Poor man's fight. If you don't go J. P. Morgan is lost. Speculation is the only cause of war. Rebel now!" [footnote: J.P. Morgan, who began his rise to become the richest man in the world by selling a bunch of defective muskets to his hometown-militia - in the Civil War,-- had heavily invested in the Allied side by extending credit to England and France for the illegal purchase of armaments in the U.S. If they lost, he would be ruined.]

Agitators from the WCU reportedly won over the miners in Wilberton, OK to go out on strike, and they refused to go back even after the UMW pulled their local's charter. It is hard to tell what all went down, because the reportage was highly prejudiced against the rebels and full of inaccuracies, but it's alleged that sabotage of rail lines and oil pipe lines was carried out. But before the rebellion could gather momentum, it was confronted by the armed posse at Roasting Ears Hill. Not wanting to fire on their neighbors, the rebels dispersed, but the posse didn't.

Instead, they conducted a witch hunt of suspected WCU members. Homes were ransacked and people beaten up and whipped with ropes. Some 450 were arrested, and many were imprisoned.

In some cases, there were shootouts, and people were killed and wounded. Thousands fled to the hills and neighboring states to hide out. Membership in the WCU was open to anyone over the age of 18, "regardless of race, sex, color, or occupation," and could have numbered as many as 35,000 people.

Despite its earlier militant rhetoric about opposing imperialist war with class war, the Socialist Party not only denounced the Green Corn rebels but shut down their Party organization in Oklahoma. The SP turned on the IWW and their own left wing, even as all were under attack by the government and "Liberty League" vigilantes. Many members were expelled, and the Party split, with the formation of the Communist Workers Party (CWP) under "Big Bill" Haywood, who was then arrested and deported, though he was American born. Even pacifist groups like the Mennonites came under harsh repression. The betrayal of the Socialist Party leadership was an act of political suicide from which the Party never recovered. Many of the middle class intellectuals, trade unionists and professionals who dominated the American Left scurried to close ranks with Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic Party.

The poor whites, Blacks, Indians, Chicanos and others of the American underclass, whose hopes and sights had been raised, were abandoned to the oppression of the KKK, company gun thugs and police. It was not until the 30s, (when the Communist Party, the CIO and other allied organizations led mass struggles), and then again in the 60s, (when many of these sections of the oppressed found their own political voices and raised them though groups like the Black Panther Party (BPP), La Raza Unida and the United Farm Workers (UFW), The American Indian Movement (AIM), the Young Lords Party (YLP) and the Young Patriot Party (YP), that the most exploited made headway at shaping a revolutionary Left in the U.S. In each case, the government unleashed J. Edgar Hoover (and the FBI) and various reactionary forces to suppress them.

Once again, the U.S. is embroiled in imperialist war, and once again, as Frank Little put it, we must decide if: *we're for this capitalist slaughterfest or we're against it.*

We must decide if we are going to stay tied to the Democratic Party or create our own people's power. As American Indians, these are questions we should be thinking about and discussing as we celebrate our Green Com feasts this summer and struggle against ongoing cultural oppression and genocide. -- Ah-ho!❑

Complicity between neo-Nazi white inmates and guards and Southern Hispanic gangs like the "Nortenos," is becoming more evident in all of these "spontaneous" race riots. Governor Schwarzenegger has clearly failed in his attempt to gain control over the California prison system and institute reforms. His predecessor, Gov. Davis, virtually handed over control of the prison system to the notoriously corrupt guards union, and Schwarzenegger's attempt to reassert control has collapsed under pressure from the special interests groups, as cited by Prison Chief Roderick Hickman in his resignation last month.

Though the majority of California's 170,000 prisoners are Black, and the politically conscious Chicano, Indigenous and Northern Mexican prisoners are struggling to build unity between all prisoners, the white Aryan Nation and other neo-Nazi factions have found willing allies among the Southern Hispanic gangs who are the instigators in the racial violence with the complicity of the guards union. The goal is to polarize and drive a wedge between the prisoners along racial lines, to put a halt to reform efforts that would interfere with the construction of new prisons.

In 2004, Hickman announced a bold new change in policy that would highlight drug rehabilitation, halfway houses and home detention for minor parole violators as an alternative to sending them back to prison. This was attacked in a media campaign sponsored by the guards union and a victim-rights group and Schwarzenegger got "cold feet" and backed down.

The Prison-Industrial Complex is a major appendage of the ruling Oligarchy and reaps billions from the incarceration of 2.3 million Americans. One can easily picture them licking their chops at the prospect of making it a felony to be an undocumented person in America. Of course this has to be reconciled with the other interest of the Oligarchy to drive down wages and employ "illegals" on the outside, and Bush is playing the role of moderator between these conflicting interests. It's called "having your cake and eating it too."❑



Transform the Iron Houses of Oppression into Schools of Liberation

By Tom Big Warrior, 1/6/04

What I remember most from reading Sun Tzu's *The Art of War,* is that to defeat your enemy you must defeat his strategy with your own. It is all well and good to talk about the abolition of prisons, but this requires that first the state itself must be abolished, for you cannot have one without the other.

But to develop a strategy that will defeat the ruling class's strategy of mass incarceration as a means of social control and the criminalization of a generation, we need a strategy that utilizes this reality and makes it work for us. Penitentiaries have always been the universities of the oppressed. Many older prisoners complain that the new crop of prisoners haven't a clue as to the ways of the "Old School." They are for the most part amateurs unlearned in the fine points of the criminal underworld and its ways and customs. The massive increase in the number of incarcerated has forever changed the situation. What is called for is a "New School," not based upon the criminal life style but upon becoming warriors who live lives of service to the people.

Most "ethnic" people are not so far removed from the warrior traditions of their ancestors. These traditions held that a warrior's life was not his own, it belonged to his people, his tribe or his nation. In these societies, the State did not exist. There were no special bodies of armed men, soldiers or police, no prisons and no class ruling over society. Every man, (and some women), was a warrior. When the need arose, he dropped what he was doing to rise to the defense of the people or perform whatever service was needed. Otherwise, he went about his business of providing for his family or neighbors in need.

This is how society worked for many thousands of years, and the virtues of the warrior were the virtues of humanity; courage, loyalty, humility, honesty and reliability. Warriors strove to be their people's pride and to set a good example for the youth and children who looked up to them and learned from them. They did not fear death, only dishonor. To die for the people was an honor.

The strategy of the ruling class is to degrade, demoralize and dishonor the members of the underclass; to turn the young women into "ho's" and the young men into "gangsta's," addicting both to "crack" or "smack" and thereby neutralize them and render them impotent in the class struggle, setting them up for early graves or long prison sentences. They give the Indian nations casinos and call this "sovereignty rights." They turn the urban barrios and "hoods" into war zones, giving the people a choice of colors in fratricidal gang warfare.

Every bit of this is about oppression, even if it puts a wad of dough in your pocket, or it puts you in a flash car or flash clothes for a while. This is all chump change to the ruling class, and you are never going to be one of them. All they will let you be is a Judas Goat with a bell around your neck leading the people to slaughter. What you sell to wear the bell is worth a lot more than what you receive.

with prisoners or our political views, rather than doing something concrete to help our people. On the other hand, the majority of Hispanic middle class and professionals (sellouts) have called for more imprisonment and harsher conditions, joining the racist-U.S. ruling class in the oppression and genocide of the Mexicano Indigenous, African, and other oppressed people.

And not to be disrespectful, but we must also struggle to inform the masses of our people that no amount of "praying" (in any language or particular religion) is going to end prison violence and death. We must explain clearly to those "clergy" who were invited by the "devil" (prison, jail, and government officials) to go into the cells to talk "peace" to prisoners, that it is not religion which is oppressing us and therefore it will not be religion which will liberate us.

The reality is that the United States (Occupied America) is a prison of nations where a small rich-racist capitalist ruling elite, with the assistance of the neocolonialists (sellouts, uncle toms, and vendidos) oppresses the great majority of the Mexican-Indigenous, African, Filipino, Puerto Rican, and other nationalities, as well as poor whites. Moreover, this oppression not only takes place within the current borders of the United States, but throughout planet earth.

The truth is that the main objective of prisons is to keep under control (and colonized) the oppressed nationalities and at the same time bring billions of dollars of profits to construction and utilities companies, judges, D.A.s, prison officials, corrupt politicians, and so forth, at the expense of the suffering of prisoners and their families. This is known as the Prison Industrial Complex.

We therefore argue that only the destruction of capitalism and colonialism will eliminate the need for prisons and thus put an end to prison violence. It doesn't take a genius to discover that the true human rights activist must aim hers/his actions against the twin pillars of human oppression, capitalism and colonialism (imperialism/global capitalism). This can only be done by supporting and joining organizations who are dedicated to eliminating capitalism and who are for true democracy, justice, and peace not just here in within the belly of the beast (United States), but for the masses of humanity throughout the world.

The CMPP is committed to continue the struggle for the human rights of prisoners and the liberation of the Mexicano Indigenous people. In the future we will work even harder to reach out to our people in an effort to end the violence among the oppressed communities.

Another World Is Necessary - Venceremos

Chicano Mexicano Prison Project/ Union del Barrio

contact: uniondelbarrio.org

Union del Barrio
PO Box 620095
San Diego, CA 92162
(619) 696-9224



The New Afrikan Black Panther Party - Prison Chapter stands in revolutionary solidarity with the companieros of the Union del Barrio Chicano Mexicano - Prison Project in condemning the conditions and situations which have led to the violence between oppressed nationalities in the California prison system. We call upon our members and supporters to work strenuously to educate the brothers and sisters to the need for unity and the folly of fratricidal violence between oppressed peoples. THE PEOPLE UNITED WILL NOT BE DEFEATED! POWER TO THE PEOPLE! ❑

Anatomy of a Spontaneous California Prison Riot

By Tom Big Warrior

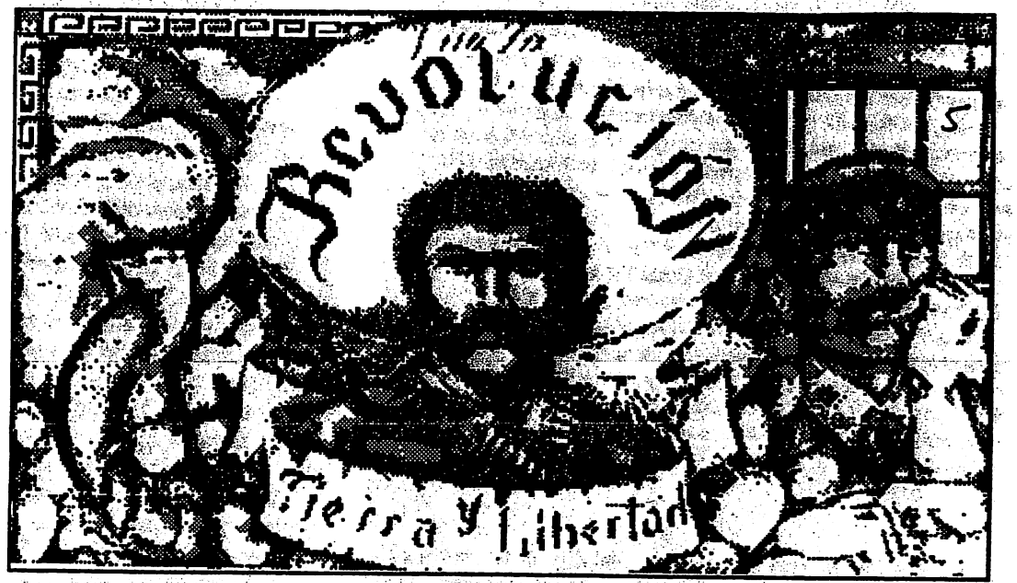
According to Taxpayers for Improving Public Safety, California had 315 prison riots in 2005. During the first week in February, 2006, hundreds of Mexican/Chicano and Black prisoners were seriously injured in rioting and at least one fatally. A California prisoner gives his eye-witness account of one of these "spontaneous" eruptions.

"Today at approximately 1:00 PM a colossal race riot exploded at CTF-North facility. It was the third since July 19, 2005. Just my luck, I am assigned to the yard crew. So I was on the yard when the shit hit the fan. At least 500 to 700 prisoners were involved. It was a 'Little Big Horn' situation for the enormously outnumbered Blacks. We're talking a 5 to 1 ratio. The racial imbalance here is clearly administratively accentuated.

"What happened was this: About 20 or 30 Blacks were playing football in the middle of the yard. Then a swarm of whites and Southern Hispanic inmates numbering about 200 or so started running towards them. The Shasta roof gunner could have easily fired a warning shot to slow the onslaught down. The Whitney Hall roof gunner was primarily shooting at Black prisoners who were incredibly overwhelmed by their attackers. I was almost shot in my head when the roof gunner shot at a Black inmate in front of me for just moving around. We were at least 50 to 70 feet away, if not further, from the violence.

"Then a large swatch of white and Southern Hispanic inmates rushed small pockets of Black prisoners using the telephones. As that was happening, an alarm was sounded in Whitney Hall. Prisoners came crawling out of the building, injured, and choking from tear gas--about 30 or so who were showering...

"Most of the staff showed up 10 to 15 minutes after all hell broke loose. They were like a bunch of drunks. Nobody knew what to do. They were just standing around. Then they placed wire restraints on most of the inmates in the yard, except the whites, who could have easily gotten up and attacked the Blacks again."



The Truth Behind Prison Violence and What We Must Do

Statement from the Chicano Mexicano Prison Project, Feb. 10, 2006

Reprinted from *Prison Art,* March 2006

During the first week of February (2006) hundreds of Mexicano Indigenous/Raza and African prisoners have been seriously injured and at least one death has been reported due to the brutal violence taking place between Raza and Africans locked up in jails and prisons in California. While many are surprised or find this brutal warfare to be something new, those of us involved in the struggle for the liberation of our peoples have known, have exposed, and have struggled against the conditions and situations which lead to the violence between oppressed nationalities.

Founded in 1993 as a project of Union del Barrio, the Chicano Mexicano Prison Project (CMPP based in San Diego, CA) for over 13 years has struggle daily to expose the human rights violations of Mexicano Indigenous prisoners and those of other nationalities. We are one of the few Raza organizations, along with the Barrio Defense Com- mittee (San Jose, CA), who are dedicated to doing this type of work. Our work has included organizing protests and pickets, regular community/barrio outreach, conferences, and the mailing of newsletters/newspapers every three months to thousands of prisoners locked up in concentration camps (prisons) through-out Occupied America (United States) - from Pelican Bay in California to Marion State Prison in Illinois. Many of our mem- bers, either have family in prison, have done time in prison, or as barrio residents, experience the same conditions which have led many of Nuestra Raza into prison. It is on this work and experience upon which we base our analyses and perspectives.

As we read the newspaper accounts, see T. V. reports, and statements from officials, in which they claim to be concerned for the well being of prisoners and that they are doing everything possible to bring calm to the prisons and jails, we can't help but be outraged by their hypocrisy and blatant lies. Not only do sources that we work with, but mainstream media accounts as well, have exposed time and time again, how prison officials and the government have either instigated violence between Mexicano Indigenous and African prisoners, or have created the conditions of over crowding and imposition of ignorance upon the mass majority of prisoners which have led to explosions of violence.

The "gladiator fights" organized by guards, as well as the denying of training and educational programs, limitations on visits, banning/censorship of reading material, lack of adequate medical services, and recreational/ exercise activities, have contributed greatly to an atmosphere of fear, anger, ignorance, and violence. Moreover, everyday the CMPP gets back issues of our newsletter from prisons labeled as "undeliverable" because of its progressive and revolutionary political content, proving that prison officials would rather keep prisoners ignorant and violent, rather than allowing them to grow politically and become productive members of the communities from which they come.

We are also greatly disappointed by those so-called activists and cultural workers who have never responded to our call for assistance and to work united with us in an effort to address the terrible inhumane conditions which exist in every prison: rape, the torture of the SHU cells (Security Housing Units), early death cause by lack of medical care, guard brutality (physical and psychological), and prisoner on prisoner violence. In fact, many have criticized us for working

Lerone Bennett, Jr. (b. 1928), senior editor of *Ebony* magazine, college and university lecturer, and author of the deservedly popular *Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America, 1619–1962* (subsequently updated), combines a poet's imaginative thrust with the social insights of a seer. To both he brings the knowledge and the perspective of the historian. His evocative writing, the hallmark of his literary style, is richly evidenced in *The Negro Mood and Other Essays* (Chicago, 1964). Of the five thematically related essays in that volume, "Tea and Sympathy: Liberals and Other White Hopes" (pp. 100–104) is a lucid analysis of the reasons for the black American's distrust of white liberals. After bringing these ostensible friends to task in the essay, Bennett closes by turning to John Brown as a contrast figure, one whose broad humanity had carried him beyond the delimitations which bedevil most men, white liberals included. The essay is used by permission of Lerone Bennett, Jr., and the Johnson Publishing Company, Inc.

Lerone Bennett, Jr.

It is to John Brown that we must go, finally, if we want to understand the limitations and possibilities of our situation. He was of no color, John Brown, of no race or age. He was pure passion, pure transcendence. He was an elemental force like the wind, rain and fire. "A volcano beneath a mountain of snow," someone called him.

A great gaunt man with a noble head, the look of a hawk and the intensity of a saint, John Brown lived and breathed justice. As a New England businessman, he sacrificed business and profits, using his warehouse as a station on the Underground Railroad. In the fifties, he became a full-time friend of freedom, fighting small wars in Kansas and leading a group of Negro slaves out of Missouri. Always, everywhere, John Brown was preaching the primacy of the act. "Slavery is evil," he said, "kill it."

"But we must study the problem . . ."

Slavery is evil—kill it!

"We will hold a conference . . ."

Slavery is evil—kill it!

"But our allies . . ."

Slavery is evil—kill it!

John Brown was contemptuous of conferences and study groups and graphs. "Talk, talk, talk," he said. Women were suffering, children were dying—and grown men were talking. Slavery was not a word; it was a fact, a chain, a whip, an event; and it seemed axiomatic to John Brown that facts could only be contraverted by facts, a life by a life.

There was in John Brown a complete identification with the oppressed. It was his child that a slaveowner was selling; his sister who was being whipped in the field; his wife who was being raped in the gin house. It was not happening to Negroes; it was happening to him. Thus it was said that he could not bear to hear the word slave spoken. At the sound of the word, his body vibrated like the strings of a sensitive violin. John Brown *was* a Negro, and it was in this aspect that he suffered.

More than Frederick Douglass, more than any other Negro leader, John Brown suffered with the slave. "His zeal in the cause of freedom," Frederick Douglass said, "was infinitely superior to mine. Mine was as the taper light; his was as the burning sun. Mine was bounded by time; his stretched away to the silent shores of eternity. I could speak for the slave; John Brown could fight for the slave. I could live for the slave; John Brown could die for the slave."

In the end, John Brown made of himself an act of transcendence. The act he chose—the tools, the means, the instruments—does not concern us here. His act, as it happened, was violent and apocalyptic; but it could have been as gentle as rain in the spring, a word perhaps, yes, or a name or a life committed to a piece of paper. Acts to the end grow out of the lineaments of men's lives and it is up to each man to create and invent not only his act but also the occasion of his act.

John Brown made his occasion, attacking the arsenal at Harpers Ferry in the hope of creating a situation in which slaves all over the South would flock to him. He begged his old friend, Frederick Douglass, to accompany him; but Douglass insisted that the plan was premature. The old white man and the young Negro argued from eight one night to three the next morning. While they argued, a tough cynical fugitive slave named Shields Green watched and weighed. After the argument, Douglass rose and asked Shields Green if he were ready to go. Green thought for a moment and then said: "I believe I go wid de old man." Shields Green was in the mountains and could have escaped when federal troops closed in on John Brown. A man suggested flight, but Shields Green said: "I believe I go down wid de old man." And he did—all the way to the gallows.

Why did Green deliberately sacrifice his life?

Not because he was irrevocably committed to John Brown's way but because he was irrevocably committed to John Brown, because, in a horribly bloody and horribly tangible way, a prayer had been answered; because he had at long last found a man, neither black nor white, who was willing to go all the way.

Who?

"I believe I go wid de old man."

Who?

"A man for all seasons, a p[illegible]

by day.

Who?

A John Brown or a Wendell Phillips or a Paine. It may be that America can no longer produce such men. If so, all is lost. Cursed is the nation, cursed is the people, who can no longer breed indigenous radicals when it needs them.

There was an America once that was big enough for a Wendell Phillips; there was even an America big enough for a Brown.

What happened to that America?

Who killed it?

We killed it, all of us, Negroes and whites, with our petty evasions and paternalistic doles, with our sycophantic simpering and our frantic flights from truth and risk and danger. We killed it, all of us, liberals and activists with the rest. Can the stone be rolled once again from the mouth of the cave? It is my faith—and all Negroes who do not have that faith are in or on their way to prisons, asylums or Paris—that buried somewhere deep beneath the detergents and lies is the dead body of the America that made Thomas Jefferson a lawbreaker and John Brown a martyr.

Can the stone be rolled away again?

Few American white men when sufficiently drunk can resist the temptations of toying with that mad idea. They come, martinis in hand, faces flushed, guilt waving, and they say: "There was this bright little old Negro boy in my class and I wonder what happened to him." Or, since speculations about the fate of bright black boys are dangerous, "There was this little old Negro girl." They say, oh, so many things and it dosen't matter for they are not saying what they are saying. What this man or that man is saying, really, is that, "I am ashamed of myself." He is saying, "There is something deep within me." He is saying, "I am better than I am."

He may be; but saying will not make it so.

"There was this little old Negro boy . . ."

Segregation is evil—kill it!

"We will hold a conference . . ."

Segregation is evil—kill it!

"But our allies . . ."

Segregation is evil—kill it!

For the Jew in Germany, the African in Salisbury, the Negro in New York:

Who?

A man beyond good and evil, beyond tea and sympathy, beyond black and white.

Who?

"A man for all seasons," a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day.

Who?

"I believe I go down wid de old man."