WOMEN



are in PRISON

BLACK PANTHER PARTY 35TH REUNION AND CONFERENCE

COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM BOOK ADVERTISING INFORMATION



APRIL 18 -20 2002
WASHINGTON, DC



It's About Time Committee has issued the call for the 35th Anniversary & Reunion of the Black Panther Party. The Reunion and Conference will be held April 18-20, 2002. Attendees will converge at the University of the District of Columbia, in Washington, D.C.

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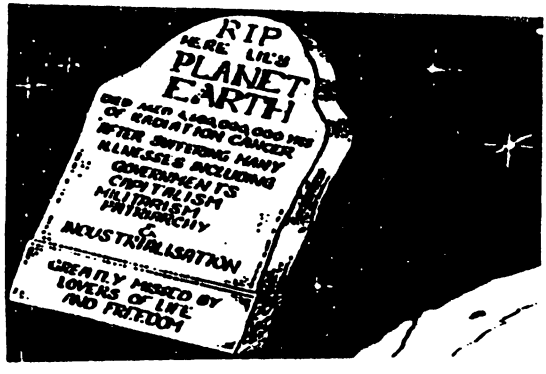
Published for a Workshop on Women Prisoners held at the A-Zone in Chicago, on March 23rd, 2002. Editted by Anthony Rayson. $2.00 *free* to prisoners



WOMEN PRISONERS

Perhaps among the most heartbreaking and angering images are those of children who are trying to smile for the camera while visiting their incarcerated mother. No stronger bond exists than that of mother and child. So, to have that torn apart by a hideous judicial system with their self-righteous judges, smarmy lawyers, do-no-wrong cops and unctious prosecutors makes it all the more a violation.

Considering that women are overwhelmingly convicted of victimless, non violent "crimes" often over instances where they are trying to provide for or protect themselves and their children from abusive men amidst a cruel reality, makes it all the more unacceptable. It's classic "blame the victim" time!

As always, the real criminals who run these class-based, racist, sexist and homophobic institutions are brainwashed (mostly) men doing the dirty work for the ultra rich white men who dominate our society. It'll make ya just scream!

Women and children are made to pay the most as they are preyed upon for sex and work and made to endure all manner of outrages, poverty, abuse, assaults, low wages, poor living conditions amidst a blatant and ubiquitous male-dominated, disgustingly profane and in all ways *pornographic* society.

It is a society that is anti-women, anti-child and anti-men, yet panders to men's prurient interests and the meatless bone of male "superiority" - much like they sucker so-called "whites" into behaving to help perpetuate the systematic racism that oppresses us all, particularly "blacks." An, of course, homophobia is rampant, as is religious (anti-women) fundamentalism, and so on. Every day, in every way these monstrous ideas are hammered into everybody throughout all media, social, political and economic situations. So, we are all prisoners, really! We're the most lied to & manipulated of all!

Two million people are being caged and abused every single day in America. Increasingly, these are young women who are being given harsher, longer sentences in crueler more dangerous hellhole dungeons, with less and less access to their children and other family members. They are often subjected to sexual assault by guards, denial of anywhere near adequate medical attention - stripped of love, life and hope.



THE VOICELESS

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Comments & Correspondence Welcome

The unique needs and lives of women are dealt with outrageously. For example, a pregnant prisoner may be forced to deliver her baby while shackled and then have that baby taken away from her in 24 hours - to be designated as a "ward of the state." Often, mothers are forced to go through DCFS proceedings, while imprisoned by which the state "legally" wrests custody of their children from them. Remember Argentina? They'd kidnap and murder the parents and then come back and wrest "legal" personal custody of their children!

Like all prisons, most of them are hidden in far away rural settings, hundreds of miles from their family members, who are mostly poor, black &/or chicano and who live in the cities, making visiting them a difficult and rare occurrence.

Women prisoners receive longer sentences for lesser crimes. If a husband or boyfriend abuses a woman, it's a "domestic dispute." If he kills her, he gets a much lighter sentence than if say, he killed some man - especially a rich one. If a woman, offs this guy while defending herself or her children from such a vicious "mate" she gets a much harsher sentence - even when it was to save her very life! Some of these women are even on death row! The system works exorably towards these cruel realities! Like the Supreme Court says, "innocence is irrelevant." Sanity doesn't matter. Fascist money-hungryism does! Women the world over - and the men - must overcome fear & fight these modern-day nazis clothed in respectability!

Often, a woman is abused and controlled by some dope fiend boyfriend / husband and is made to provide money for drugs via forced prostitution or being a "mule" in drug-running.



BLINDED JUSTICE



MARGARET MAJOS B#49682
P.O. BOX # 549.
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When the pigs come to bust an operation, many times, the dealer is gone and the woman who is home with the children takes the rap, even if she had nothing to do with his activities. She gets the jail sentence and she may lose her children to protect him or because they can't find him. It's "justice!"

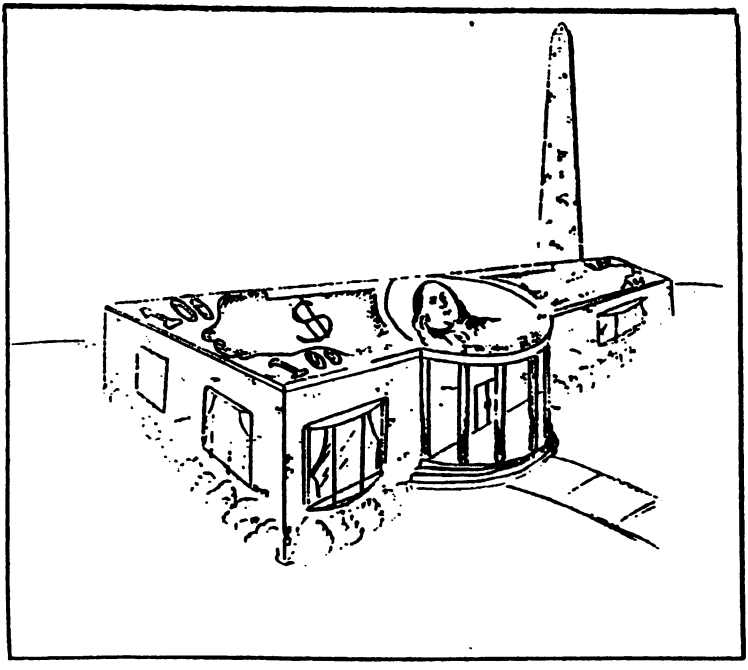


BRUTALIZED

Many of the reasons women are in prison are economic. Men leave them in poverty, don't pay real support, the social services are pathetic as far as helping her care for her children are concerned, the job she is able to get pays a pittance wage, with long hours and so on. To make ends meet, keep a roof over their head, pay the bills and put food on the table is not easy. Desperate women may resort to shoplifting or credit card abuse to provide for their families. Often the men can't help because they are already in prison themselves!

Middle-class and rich women get out of these problems without much of a to-do, either having the charges dropped, agreeing to some sort of "counselling" or having the means to hire a lawyer. If she's poor and especially black, the prosecutors and judges put her behind bars and move to take her children. Prosecutors get bonuses for convictions and are never subjected to any sort of discipline themselves for abusing the already rigged judicial system. It's a heartless sport to them and these women and the children torn from them are the real victims. We're *ALL* victims and we suffer every day!

The credit-card companies and stores factor in theft by raising all their prices, above and beyond their outrageous mark-ups and credit card interests. They have lawyers who get them out of paying corporate taxes and politicians who provide them with corporate welfare. That's where the real theft occurs - in the corporate board rooms. The real criminals never even face the possibility of criminal proceedings being brought against them.



CAPITAL HILL

Governments mass murder people every day through bombing, sanctions, deprevation of every sort of basic necessity such as water and food, throughout the world. But in place of justified punishment, they receive obscene profits! Women snared in this Moloch evil system of kidnapping and incarceration are shunted off to some hideous prison. We have to reach out *totally* to our imprisoned sisters!

Down in Kankakee County in the little poor black farming community of Hopkins Park, population 800, Governor George Ryan, in league with his billionaire buddy, Kankakee developer, Tony Perry, is coercively forcing the creation of an 1,800 bed women's prison in the town! So, they want to more than triple the population of the town, with the townspeoples' sisters, mothers, aunts and daughters from the city! You see what I mean about "profanity?" It underpins everything!

Now, they try to pretend that this is a wonderful economic boom! But, instead of the laundromat, grocery store, gas station and recreation center that they want and need, this is what they get! And they're supposed to pretend they like it!

The white farmers took the best farm soil decades ago in the area, but the black folks down in Hopkins Park have a unique and wonderful environment amidst the poverty and many of them are organic farmers to maximize their yields. The *last* thing these folks want is a women's prison! And who can blame them? But it speaks of the offensive, vicious world government we are *all* up against! It's truly a totally insane concept to house thousands of women as P-R-I-S-O-N-E-R-S!

It really does spring from the whole greed gone wild world we live in today. It really is a type of extreme capitalism of Orwellian no-think to "humanitarian" genocidal wars to cold yet frenzied profit-taking. The ecology's being raped, animals forced into bondage, eviseration, slaughter &/or extinction. The air, water and soil are being gobbled up into the maws of sprawl, unbridled industrial pollution, concretization, poisoning, logging, in short - destroying! Armies of trained killers are being deployed throughout the world and violence and starvation are pandemic! It's an all-pervasive oppression.

And the treatment of women is Naziesque abhorrent! Mass genocidal rapes of entire countrywide communities of women!



GIVE MORE MONEY OOC extends much thanks to the foks who sent us checks. But the future of *Out of Time* remains in jeaopardy since we got so few donations. Here's another chance to make our doggies happy (see last issue "The Dogs Of OOC"). Use our eavelope (if one is provided) or use your owa. Make your check out to "Out of Control." Or... if your donation is for $50 or more and you want a tax deduction, make your check out to "John Brown Education Fund" and earmark it "OOC." You can also pledge a monthly amount if you like. One dear subscriber gave us her "G.W. Bush tax rebate." Send the check to:
OOC, 3543 18th Street, Box 30, San Francisco, CA 94110

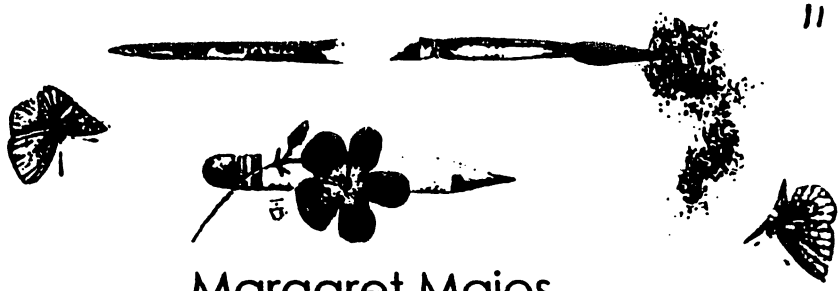
Men, too! The men they just shoot in cold-blooded murder along ditches! Of course, like the Taliban, atrocities - to men but uniquelly and medievally, to women - these were received with a ho-hum yawn from Uncle Sam, who no doubt has always had continuing ties to these madmen. The arms merchants, both independent or tied to some government (U.S. very prominent among them) had a field day. Hundreds of thousands were murdered for nothing. Rwanda, too. A millon people were systematically butchered for weeks and the world does nothing! Right now the U.S. military is murdering hundreds of people a day! in Afghanistan. Once the starvation really hits, due to American inaction to keep people alive, it will be thousands a day! We want to kill, not save!

It's sort of like after the Iraq "war," where the U.S. encouraged the Southern Shiites and Northern Kurds to revolt against Saddam Hussein in the wake of the hyper war just unleashed. But in that case, The U.S. winked as Saddam systematically executed tens of thousands who tried to revolt, around Basra. Also, the Kurds were massacred. The U.S. let it happen. Hundreds of thousands of dead kids are "worth it" according to the genosadist, Madelaine Albright of the U. S.

Women suffer throughout the world at the hands of the monied. Women & girls provide life and love and strength and everything, and this is the thanks we give them? Everyone in the whole world *knows* where the outrageous evil is eminating from, but are too afraid to do anything about it!

Like those guys on the plane - "It's time to roll!" We can't willingly and without rousing, go down with the ship! We hafta fight! We have no alternative because we want to live and have a future for our children. Simple as that!

Anthony Rayson



Margaret Majos

2 - 28 - 02 Dear Anthony!

We are on "lockdown" now and many of my roommates are asleep, and my moral standards don't allow me to be disrespectful by making noise on a typewriter. So, I hope that you don't mind if I print my enclosed informative sharing story article on prison life for women. It's not a picnic, that's for sure!

Continue to fight, Anthony and recruit others with a heart for justice to support us. This is pure hell or a first step to it. I hate to see and hear all the madness. When I close my eyes I cry and think of my family, but I refuse to give up or in.

You can be proud of me, my comrade! Smile! Thank you for understanding that even though I'm a Christian, I share my political beliefs with yours! Thank you for your letter and the zine. I love it! I am so glad that your son is free of authoritarian bondage. My hugs to him. He's going to be somebody. Like Daddy! My greetings to your wife, also!

Can I send you a photo? Well! Actually, I'm enclosing one in the materials I'm sending you. Read it! It's so interesting and sad. I'll write you again. I wanted all this to get to you before the presentation. Write and let me know how did it go, o'kay? This whole place is a "joke." Correctional Center - yeah, right?!

Well!

My love & peace to you all!

Tell Emelda I said hello!

Your friend,

Margaret

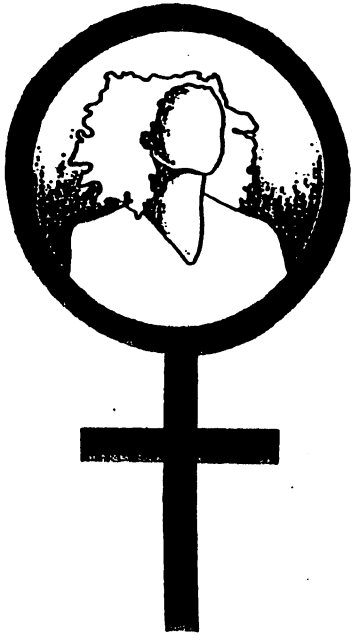
"WOMEN IN PRISON"
"PROPAGANDA OF CORRECTIONS"

Well! Before I go further, I must admit that I have learned, seen and heard almost everything in prison. Life itself is not easy, nor is it promised to be roses without thorns. The Creator is a Master of all. Thorns are needed to sharpen our attitudes, build our character and enlarge the area of our ideas, goals and dreams. After twelve years of incarceration, nothing surprises me! Should it, though?

Control is what Director Snyder and all his staff want to regain back, but do they even take their time to analyze how and what way is the healthy way to do such? If you'd ask them, their response most assuredly would be something like this: "Step by step we discipline more and stress stricter rules and regulations."

Wow! Yeah, gaining back control! How? By "robbing" the residents (I hate the word 'inmates') off of everything they can think of. They talk about cutting back on the budget they spend, but on another hand provide brand new uniforms and all other items to officers that cost them a fortune. Fortune! It's a "scandal" in my eyes and they are open widely now.





Not only was my spiritual mind awakened, but also political. Yeah, the staff are provided well, yet the residents cannot even be issued to have a long underwear for a winter-time. Only if you work outside. We are all outside every day. Some say, "Thank God! The winter is not bad *this* year!" But how about other winters? What then?

The authorities took away all our private clothing knowing they cannot provide proper wear for all. Why even bother to take it away? Because we were too comfortable? What a joke?! Comfort in prison!? Maybe if you are a brain-washed, ignorant individual, but never could I be comfortable in this dark, deep tunnel. There is no rehabilitation in prisons today. No one in free society cares enough to see it. "Lock them up for the rest of their lives! Animals! Away with them!"

Shame! There is a small (10%) percentage of us who care to change for better and be the asset to our neighbors. Mind is a terrible place to waste! So much waste I see on a daily basis. At times, I cry and say, "I feel like a bird caged-up for so long, ready to fly, and can't get out. The bird finally dies." I refuse to die! I refuse to give-up or give-in into the madness.

These women want their identities, minds, hearts, warmness, compassion or passion to stand on what they believe in. Can you see them going back to their spouses and children - cold, bitter angry? Scary thought!

The crime rate rises and the only way to balance that is to rehabilitate people and help them to sense the value of their own lives, no matter what. So many are repeated offenders with nothing to offer. Can you ask yourself, Why? "They chose their path" - some say. Well! Maybe? Even God reaches out to the rejected ones. People that I've met during my incarceration are the ones who try so hard to make a change, without any support, such as Anthony Rayson, Chaplains: Anne in Cook County Jail, Johnsons in Logan & Lincoln, Teachers, Political/Spiritual advisors.

I look at my own struggle to become what I am today - a strong, wise, brave, loving and caring wife, daughter, Mother, friend & citizen. The road was not easy.

In 1990, I was told that I would receive the death penalty. Yet my destiny changed. I give tribute to God and people whom I mentioned, with tears in my life (eyes.) I choke when I think of all the things that I've experienced in life.

I never could forget my dear friend, named Sandra. She was full of life, love and energy. No major health problems, but one horrible day, she was diagnosed with blood clots and a heart condition. My dear Sandra became weak and scared. I

remember many nights comforting her that it all will be alright. I won't let her die. Oh, I felt like I failed her!

She was there one day and the next she was gone. She was neglected medically and morally. One night she screamed so loud, banged on the heavy metal and closed door of her cell for hours. No one could reach out to her! No one! I screamed! The officer on the monitor ignored her. It cost her life. Her heart couldn't take it.

Finally, they took her in a wheelchair into an elevator and she died right there without me as I promised. The news was too horrible to accept knowing she could be saved. Imagine the pain and anger? Why so much coldness toward another human being?

She was only one of many who died or lost their minds. Another lady was misdiagnosed with having a lung condition. One day she almost died choking. They sent her out to the hospital for a check-up and to find-out the shocking results. It was cancer in its latest stage. Knowing earlier, maybe she could be among us today? She is dead.

The point is, how many have to die to wake up! Thousands of dollars are spent on the health department but what do they mean? The building, the staff? Because many residents still suffer without being fairly taken care of. I could write books on all these issues. But would it change anything or anybody's heart to recognize that we are still people. People! And not animals.

Yes! Some don't care to work on themselves and if prison is what they "like," that's on them. But the rest of us want something better. Who could support us to achieve our goals and dream our dreams? Who is willing to have faith in us and guide us? Every heart and soul deserves a second chance. Where is our chance? They lock us up and away and forget that we exist.

Going back to the goal of regaining control by Director Snyder. Well! I'm here to tell you how can anybody say that when the word of one inmate against another determines your being in here? Yeah, being honest, the residents have the "undesired" control. Whenever someone doesn't like you or feels "intimidated" by your high standards & beliefs, she "drops" a note on you lying, and without justifiable action, they move you around like a toy. You have no say-so over it. What an absurd!

Even in a court of law, you have the right to a counselor, advocate and a fair trial (constitutional.) Here you have no right to witnesses, explanation or a lie-detector - even if you are willing to pay the expenses! Sad story!

At times, you must give-out or up your own food to survive or avoid the unnecessary non-sense. Kind of "You owe me"

mentality. Even God said owe man nothing, but love? Where is the love? What is freedom? Where is it? 15

Many would say, "Being at home or being free to move or speak is freedom." Wrong! That's not real freedom! Real freedom is to be able to look into yourself and say, no matter what, I have the choice to say no or yes to things and people around me, to love yourself and others, and think for yourself. In the face of opposition, you can stand tall and not sink! That's a freedom.

Talking about miscarriage to justice. In county jail, you sleep with two other women in a small closet size without windows that can be open, no air to breathe. In a winter-time you could see the dripping over the walls. No heat (barely.) Dead mice in your food. No! It's not an exaggeration. This is not a picnic nor college campus, as many think today.

If that was a picnic, I'd rather die. This place is horrible. I can go on and on about the living, or should I say "slow death-dying" condition.

How about the sharing of a dorm with other 19 females? Speaking in terms of law statutes, every prisoner is supposed to have a certain amount of square meters of space. And that is violated (constitutional violation.)

There is no privacy whatsoever. In a bathroom, there is no doors, open area, few sinks and stool seats. In a shower, you have 8 shower heads and must expose your bodt daily. Some of us have rape or abuse issues. You can't grasp a fresh air, no windows to open, one small day room full of smoke. Yuck!

Fighting for a non-smoking unit they will tell you "Don't waste your time. We don't need it!" The intensive noise deprives you from proper rest or sleep. You suffer from migraine headaches and mostly must provide your own pain-killers. Health care is poor. So is the clothing. Room living areas are dirty and messy. Besides all that beatings, fights and arguments between residents increase. Now, they think about cutting-out schooling. Another disaster!

Profanity is not allowed, but only residents get punished for disobeying. I'm not fond of vulgar language at all, but for example standing in a rain or snow, cold temperature or "scalding" sun for a quiet of time outside waiting on permission to move. Some lose their patience. Is that discipline or brain-washing? Some of us don't even need the discipline anymore. We've achieved more than offfered. Myself - I got many degrees, diplomas. I volunteer in many programs, give myself to others. But, it is appreciated. Ask yourself!

In 1999, I was badly injured. We were forced to remodel the unit - walls - scrape the old paint off and hammer the wall to the brick. No proper tools. No safety glasses. Part of the wall fell on me and hurt my back. I was treated (not right away) but still had to work and suffer further complications. Till this day, I am not able to do the things that I was able to do before. I can't lift or push heavy objects, no weight-lifting. I can only sleep in a certain position. 16

This is not the most painful thing. What is more painful is being separated from my loved ones for so long and not being able to see them too often (long distance.) I've missed the precious moments of first step or the first tooth of my child.

I see little children crying for their Mommies, hanging onto them, screaming. When will this end? It's a heart-breaking to see those little eyes watery, tears streaming down their cheeks.

A friend who used to have nightmares about her child, found out the horror of rape, and murder of the younster. She couldn't even go to the funeral. Yeah, that is another issue. Depending on your charge, mostly you can't go to the funeral to pay last regards.

I would like to mention also the discomfort and mental torture during "lock-down." You can't have contact with the outside world, no phone-calls, no showers, no treatment, even for those with severe asthma. On many occasions we are searched, "dropped" for drug-testing, touched all over. Women with rape and abuse issues can't handle it very well. Many experience flashbacks. Nobody is perfect, and nothing is sure.

We're crying out loud to be heard. A bird's song is soothing to a soul. Our pleading is to those who love life and justice. So many innocent women are incarcerated and their children do time with them growing up resentful. Why so much pain? Why do our lives have to be determined and judged by others who are just people with mistakes on their count.

I have a hard time to explain to my 12-year old son or an 11-year old daughter why such a harsh sentence upon me was executed. Let me tell you. If you were ever in need to learn of bias or hatred, stand in court as accused of crime that they assume you've committed. Doing time is rough, but we must be tough to defeat the enemy.

Depression took over many of my friends who tried to kill themselves and didn't succeed. So instead of being understood or heard, they were put in a single room without personals, (hygiene items) sheets - nothing, but a hard bed and dirty mattress. They can't bathe for days, comb their hair, neither

brush their teeth in a midst of a desire to *die* anyway!

Death is the only companion they feel. No counsel, no prayer. Just mocking and cursing. My heart went out to them, and in spite of trying to help, I'm turned down. "They don't need you. It's their problem." I was told. *No!* That's why this world is so messed-up. Nobody cares about anybody.

Women are violent, full of rage, beating each-other brutally and no one puts the sign up "Enough." Yes! It's enough! Yet, one person can't do it all.

I remember my own children being "ripped" out from my arms crying for me. I lost the sight of myself. Who am I anymore? I almost lost my husband to a suicide after the sentence. This system destroyed everything I've had, yet... never could they take my pride, dignity, faith and mind or will to live and get it all back.





Life is not a destiny - it's a journey. Have a great one! Have courage to do what you believe in and never look back. Life goes on and so must you.

My dream is only to see justice served to many and people waking-up from numbness and ignorance to the world around them. Look at yourself and ask yourself: "What is my part in this? Do I have peace doing nothing?" Only you can answer it! Peace!

By: Margaret Majos

The terrific artwork presented here so far has been drawn by Todd (Hyung-Rae) Tarselli # BY - 8025
175 Progress Drive Waynesburg, PA 15370-8089

REBEL GRRRL ZINE
6167 N. Broaday, #417
Chicago, IL, 60660

February 14, 2002

Dear the people of Thought Bombs,

I am writing to you in the hopes that you can offer some suggestions or assistance on a project that I am working on. Approximately two years ago, I founded a program called Create Me Free. It began as a 'zine that offered information about the United States Prison System, including the ways in which the government and private corporations profit off of incarcerating people, the problems that exist with the drug war and arguments against the drug war. While still an informative program, the focus eventually shifted. It became a project dedicated not so much to complaining about the flaws in the system as to helping the individuals within the system.

Create Me Free is a program that deals with artists and writers (in the loosest sense of the word) who are in prison. It's focus is to allow a forum for self-expression, giving the prisoner a productive outlet for his/her ideas. It's intention was to produce a quarterly zine of information and art, produced mostly by the inmates themselves. The idea behind this is that it not only gives a voice to the people behind bars and raises awareness of issues of concern, but it also acts as a form of catharsis for the creator of each work. It lets them know people are interested in who they are and what they have to say, a situation that has never been the case for many of them.

The problem I have is that the program became too popular too quickly. After putting out just two issues, I was bombarded with over four hundred inmate requests for the quarterly zine and information on getting critiques on pieces of art. For almost a year now, I have been trying to find the funding to put out the third issue of the zine and continue my work. It is obviously fulfilling a need that exists. So many people have written just to thank me for creating such a program, and yet, I am now letting them all down, because I can't come up with the money to correspond with that many people, nor to produce that many copies of the zine. Most of these prisoners are indigent and can not afford to help out.

My question to you is if you have any suggestion at all on what I can do to raise the money to continue this program. I have looked in to grants to no avail. I have attempted to sell issues of the zine to people who are not incarcerated, but the interest is apparently lacking. I am wholly unsure of where to turn. Rest assured, I am not asking you for funding. I am just hoping that someone within the community has some ideas on where I can locate the sources I need.

Thank you so very much for your time and attention. I really hope that I hear from you soon!

Kathryn Vercillo @ Create Me Free
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TURKISH PRISONER SUPPORT HUNGER STRIKE



(Information excerpted from *The New York Times Magazine*, October 21, 2001, *The Hunger Warriors* by Scott Anderson)

In Kucuk Armutlu, Northern Istanbul men and women are starving themselves to death to protest the Turkish governments prison policies. Since last fall, 40 politically motivated hunger strikers have died, choosing death by starvation as a weapon against a government that isn't paying attention. And more will die, because "...four new teams, comprising some 180 more strikers, have joined the fast...which means the dying might continue into next summer or beyond, and the final toll could reach the hundreds." (The *New York Times Magazine*, October 21, 2001)

There are many grievances against the Turkish government. However, the primary, core demand is "...for the abandonment of (the) new generation of modern prisons in which inmates are housed in one or three-man cells and a return to the dormitory – style prisons of the past. Most of those who have died are current or former inmates serving time for political offenses. According to journalist Scott Anderson, there are an estimated 6,000 inmates held under the 1991 Anti – Terror Law. Of these inmates, less than "...10% have been convicted of a violent offense, and more than half have yet to be convicted of anything..." Most of the strikers belong to an outlawed Communist group.

ROBIN LEE ROW #40171
P.W.C.C. UNIT 4
POST OFFICE BOX 6049
POCATELLO, IDAHO 83205

SEPTEMBER 4, 2000

DEAR ANTHONY,

HELLO! RECEIVED YOUR LETTER. GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU AGAIN. YOU SAID THAT YOU DO WORK FOR PRISONERS. WHAT TYPE OF WORK, MIGHT I ASK? JUST CURIOUS! I GET REQUESTS, BUT THEY USUALLY COME FROM SOMEONE ON THE OUTSIDE.

FEELING A LOT BETTER. I HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT SICK FOR SEVERAL MONTHS NOW, BUT KEPT PUTTING OFF GOING TO MEDICAL, JUST BECAUSE I HATE GOING THERE - THE STRIPS SEARCHES AND STUFF. ANYWAYS, IT HAS BEEN SO BAD THAT THE NURSE TOLD ME I BETTER GO IN. SO, I WENT MONDAY. I HAVE ALLERGIES AND THE SMOKE FORM THE FOREST FIRES HAVE BEEN AGGRAVATING THEM. I STARTED ON THE MEDICATION MONDAY NIGHT AND I FEEL 90% BETTER ALREADY. NOW WE NEED TO IDENTIFY WHAT KIND.

IT IS GOOD THAT YOU ARE CLOSE TO YOUR YOUNGEST. HE IS AT THE AGE WHERE DADDY IS IMPORTANT. I AM GLAD TO HEAR THAT YOU AND STANTON ARE GETTING ALONG BETTER. I WAS VERY CLOSE TO MY FATHER AND THEN MY PARENTS GOT DIVORCED. THAT DEVASTATED ME. WE SAW A LOT OF EACH OTHER AND THEN ONE DAY HE WAS GONE. I WAS UTTERLY DESTROYED. I WAS TWELVE AT THE TIME AND I DID NOT FIND OUT THE TRUTH UNTIL I WAS 16. HE HAD BEEN IN PRISON. MY MOTHER "THOUGHT" IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I DID NOT KNOW. BY THEN I HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT LIFE WAS THE PITS AND SKIPPED SCHOOL, STAYED OUT ALL NIGHT, LIED TO MOTHER, ETC. I BLAMED MY MOTHER FOR SENDING HIM AWAY AND ALL THAT. THEN WHEN I WAS 16 I OVERHEARD MY MOTHER, ON THE PHONE, WITH HIM. HE WANTED TO SEE ME AND MY MOTHER WAS TELLING HIM NO. THAT JUST MADE ME RUN AWAY AND THEN I FOUND THE LETTERS HE WROTE ME AFTER THE COPS BROUGHT ME BACK HOME. SHE KEPT LETTERS FROM ME. I THOUGHT SHE DID IT FOR ME AND WHAT WAS GOOD FOR ME, BUT SHE TOLD ME, DURING A FIGHT, THAT SHE DID IT TO HURT MY FATHER. THAT DIVORCED AND THE PAINS AFTER TOTALLY DESTROYED MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY MOTHER. I HAVE TRIED TO MAKE AMENDS, BUT I DO NOT THINK WE EVER WILL. EVEN NOW, OVER 30 YEARS LATER, WE HAVE NOTHING TO SAY TO EACH OTHER. JUST ONE BIG MESS. THEN TO TOP IT OFF I DO NOT EVEN KNOW WHERE MY FATHER IS NOW. LAST TIME I SAW HIM WAS IN MARCH 1977.

SORRY, I DID NOT MEAN TO RAMBLE, JUST WANTED TO POINT OUT THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM. I STILL REALLY MISS MY DAD.

SO, YOUR WIFE IS REMODELING. DOES SHE HAVE A "HONEY-TO-DO LIST"? GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO DO AND KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE!!! SMILE

THE FAIR - SOUNDS GOOD! WISH I COULD HEAR YOUR RADIO SHOW. I HOPE YOU GET SOME POSITIVE RESPONSES.

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE AIRPORT? I HEARD SOMETHING, ON THE NEWS, ABOUT AN AIRPORT, SOMEWHERE IN ILLINOIS, AND THAT NO ONE WAS USING IT. JUST WONDERED IF IT WAS THE SAME ONE. IF MEMORY SERVES ME IT WAS CALLED "AIR AMERICA" BUT DO NOT HOLD ME TO THAT.

SOUNDS LIKE YOU DO NOT LIKE IDLE HANDS.

ARE YOUR BOYS LOOKING FORWARD TO SCHOOL? WILL THIS BE STEVEN'S FIRST YEAR? IS YOUR WIFE GOING TO HAVE EMPTY NEST SYNDROME? I DID WHEN MY YOUGEST WENT OFF TO KINDERGARTEN AND IT WAS ONLY A HALF A DAY!

GUESS THAT IS ABOUT IT. MY BOYFRIEND WILL BE MAILING THIS TO YOU. COMMISSARY REALLY MESSED UP MY ORDER AND I DID NOT GET MY ENVELOPES. SO HE WILL BE MY POSTMAN. SMILE

TAKE CARE!

ALWAYS,



(Robin is on Death Row...)

What is the definition of first degree murder?

Answer: It is the premeditated killing of a human being.
To wit - a murder.

What is the definition of capital punishment?

Answer: It is the scheduled execution of a human being by the government.
To wit - a murder.

I am confused! Aren't these two definitions basically the same? The difference is the first one is an illegal act according to the law. The second one is a legal act under the law.

How can this be? Who made these laws? Who upholds these laws? That is simple - the people of the United States of America. A civilized country. A country where people are proud to live. A country who takes care of its own. A country that still puts its people to death and is proud of it! A country that cheers at its executions.

This just doesn't make any sense. How can the same group of citizens say murder is wrong, but executions are right. In their eyes it just depends who is doing the killing.

I say they are both wrong!

Capital punishment needs to be abolished. It is not a safe method of punishment. It is a cruel and unusual form of punishment.

Since the death penalty was re-instated in 1976, over 80 individuals have been exonerated and released from death rows all over the USA.

Illinois, alone, has released more men from death row than it has executed. Thus a moratorium was issued on executions until a study of the syaytem, in that State, could be completed. Other States need to follow suit!

Capital punishment is administered unfairly. If you happened to live in a large county, in your State, then the chances of you receiving the death penalty is higher than if you live in a county that doesn't have the resources for a capital trial.

Poor/indigent individuals are more likely to receive the death penalty, because they are usually assigned an over worked Public Defender, who is probably inexperienced in handling a capital trial.

With a Public Defender you aren't going to have expert testimony and related tests due to the lack of funds in their budget. However, the Prosecution has all of the State's resources at their disposal.

The USA, is still one of the few countries, left that execute individuals. who were minors at the time of their alleged crime.

Innocent people end up on death row, because the prosecution and possibly the judge and police have an agenda of its own. The State wants another feather in its hat come election time.

Because of society's rush to judgment, innocent people may be executed.

Some say that would never happen - how do they know? DNA testing wasn't available a few years ago to possibly determine an innocent person(s).

I hear all of the time - an eye for an eye. You certainly know that a Christian didn't say that, because he would know that was in the Old Testament times. We are now in New Testament times and the teaching of this time period.

Jesus proclaims "do not judge" - "do not cast stones" - "turn the other cheek" - "forgive."

The death penalty is vengeance and the Lord said that vengeance was His.

What does the death penalty teach our children? That violence is okay to stop violence? They follow the examples of their parents. Aren't you showing them, that by believing in the death penalty, it is okay to kill?

The death penalty does not deter crime.

The death penalty doesn't make our streets safer.

How can the USA speak about human rights, in this country, as well as over the world, when it still violates a human being by taking their life from them at the hands of the government. How can we expect other countries to respect us when we still kill to teach a lesson. This isn't war time, so why are we killing people???

What did Jesus say when He was being executed and He was!?

"Forgive them Father for they do not know what they do."

I have to agree that our society doesn't know what it is doing when it kills a human being.

Murder is wrong, no matter who does it.

THE KILLING MUST STOP NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Written by: Robin Lee Row #40171
P.W.C.C. Unit 4
Post Office Box 6049
Pocatello, Idaho 83205
United States of America

CAPÍTULO 358.976
HOY: "REINSERCIÓN SOCIAL TRAS LOS MUROS DE LAS PRISIONES"



ABOLIREMOS ESTA SOCIEDAD PORQUE NO SOPORTAMOS SU OLOR

TIFFANY BILLOPS-03006-024
P.O. Box 6000 Federal Prison Camp
Greenville, Illinois,62246

24

Greetings,

My name is Tiffany Billops and I am currently an inmate at the Federal Institution in Greenville, Illinois. I am not exactly sure as to how I should began this letter, what I should say or what I'm expecting to come of this, so please forgive me if I am not making very good sense.

I've been incarcerated since Jan. 12, 1994, I was nineteen (19) years of age at that time. I recieved a two-hundred-sixty-two (262) month sentence for my involvement in a Conspiracy to Distrubute Cocaine Base. I am not trying to proclaim innonence because I know I am not, but I'm not guilty of what I was s sentenced for. I know you all recieve a lot of stories about people saying that they did not do something or they had no knowledge of the things that were taking place. My story is different. Being that I know I was guilty to some degree I was not trying to deny anything that I knew I had done, given that fact along with thw fact of simply not knowing I admitted to things that happened prior to my incarceration (years before my arrest). This sstatement was given to the State of Illinois which was the prosecuting party, however the case ended up being tried by the Federal Government. By the State I was being charged with Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance, which was 10.4 grams of cocaine base.

I was indicted on three (3) charges; Conspiracy to possess with the intent to distrubute cocaine base, Possession of with the intent to distribute cocaine base and Use of a firearm during and in relation to a drug trifficking crime. A plea agreement was offered but only on the conditions that I not only accept responsibility for my actions but I must also assist the government. I refused to appear before a Grand Jury as a witness for the government so therefore my plea was unacceptable. The Public Defender I was appointed informed me that they were offering me a plea beginning at the maximum of the guideline that I was facing. He also ststed that after I provided information and testimony against those whom I had dealings with and they obtained a conviction they would recommend a 50% reduction. That did not seem fair to me and testifing against others wasn't something that I could bring myself to do so I decide to go to trial.



I knew I was guilty but I was going to dispute the amount of drugs that was being attributed to me. During the time when they were investigating for the Presentence Report to be written is when I learned that I was going to be sentenced for not only more than 500 grams but less than 1.5 kilograms but also a recommened 2point increase for the weapon that I was found not guilty of having and also a 2-point increase for Obstruction of Justice which took my guideline range from a level 26 with a range of 70-87 months to a level 40 with a range from 324-405 months. After trial I was convicted of the Conspiracy and the lesser inclued offense on the second charge of Possession and as I said not guilty of the firearm charges. I was sentenced under a level 36 with a range of 262-327 months I recieved the "low end". However, as I said , if I were sentenced under the evidence that the government used and presented at trial then I would have sreved my term of imprisonment and one year over (I have been incarcerated for 90 months plus I recieved the one year reduction for sucdessful completion of the 500 hour drug program).

I know people need to hear about the unfairness of our "justice" system but at this point and time I would like to break the montony of focusing on how wrong the system is and to let it now be known that the best way to beat this unfair system right now is to never become involved with them. I'm sure that when I say "all the effort that is being put forth is greatly apprieciated", there are a lot of organizations that are fighting to see this system turned around. We are gaining ground but the struggle continues.

The prison system is set up to break down the mind of the prisoners in order to enable them to "attempt" to reconstruct the mind and conform it into their beliefs (the beliefs of society. I must admit that prison can be rough and challenging on a daily basis trying to maintain emotionally and in every aspec of this "lifestyle". The rehabilitation concept about prison is a

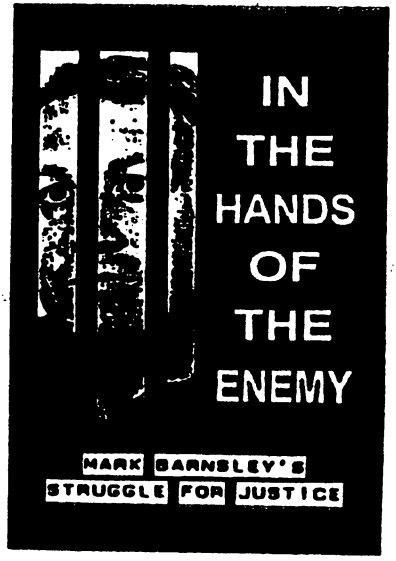


facade (one of the many) put forth to the public to gain support in all it's injustices. In here we are not viewed as human beings, we are looked at ss the outcasts of society, thrown away and forgotten, meangingless and insignificant, that is why I am now more capable to understand and respect organizations as these because if were not for these groups in solidarity we would have no voice. I am very grateful being that I was only 19 years of age when I began my sentence, that I was able to maintain my mental strenght and challenge my own counter-productive thoughts and not allow the system to conform my thoughts and actions to what they believe they should be, don't get me wrong I came very close but I was saved!

There is a modern day iron curtain that has in a sense taken on a new meaning. The iron curtain today is no longer that impentratable political and ideaological barrier between the Soviet Bloc and the rest of the world, it now exsists between the United States and its own citizens. I belive that today what concerns the people who have experienced the system first hand and those of us who are of aware of and recongize the wrongs of the system is that thsy no longer concern themselves with punishing individuals for their crimes and/or their actions but they are moreso turning it into a standing form of repression of citizens own beliefs and ideaologies and focusing on "political stature", who's the toughest on crime, it's all about political gain!

The government has long ago lost sight of what America once stood for: One nation under God, indivisiable with LIBERTY an JUSTICE for ALL! However,as time progresses, this statement is pushed further and further out of the minds of politicians with no intent to restore that statement as a matter of truth to be spoken about the government. I know it is not the goal of the government to really try to help "us" but does the public know that? Does the public really know that the government is more of a hinderance on the mind of the incarcerated, the poverty stricken, than they are a help as they claim to be?

I hope I haven't taken up too much of your time but I have remained silent for almost eight (8) years and I have still yet alot that I would like to say. However I look forward to hearing from you and hopefully something will prevail against all the wrongs in our government. Thank you for your time.



Mark Barnsley has been transferred to Whitemoor. You can write to him at; Mark Barnsley WA2897- HMP Whitemoor, Longhill Road, March, Cambs, PE15 0PR. This new book (see review in DA20) contains writings by Mark and his supporters. "In the Hands of the Enemy" is available from: Justice for Mark Barnsley, PO Box 381, Huddersfield HD1 3XX, England. Price - £6 (inc p&p). Cheques/Postal Orders payable to "Justice for Mark Barnsley". Email: barnsleycampaign@hotmail.com Website: www.freemarkbarnsley.com

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PRISONS IN THE U.S.

1. There are approximately *2 million* people in US prisons and jails today, and *5.7 million* people under state supervision.

2. The incarceration rate in the United States is 725 for every 100,000--the highest in the world. One in every 130 people will serve time at some point in their lives.

3. One of 3 African American men in the US will serve time in prison in their lifetimes.

4. The number of women serving time in state and federal prisons has increased 92% in the last 10 years.

5. The US currently cages more people of color per capita than any other nation.

6. It costs *more* to send a person to prison for a year than to Harvard University for a year.

7. The prison system is not filled with violent and dangerous people; the majority of people are being sent to prison for drug charges and acts which involve *no violence whatsoever.*

8. Private corporations such as Eddie Bauer and Microsoft employ prison slave labor. Prisoners are forbidden by law to unionize or strike; they are not protected by minimum wage laws for the Fair Labor Standards Act; they cannot voice complaints or even refuse to work without receiving *severe* retaliation.

9. Conditions in US prisons have been repeatedly condemned by groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch for violating the United Nations *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.*

10. Healthcare for prisoners is practically nonexistent. It is common practice for prisoners to be denied medical examinations and treatments.

Contrary to what the government and mass media lead you to believe, sources such as the *Uniform Crime Report* and the *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* confirm that there has been no increase in the crime rate. Yet the imprisonment rate has more than tripled and expenses for criminal "justice" have increased six-fold.

Caging more and more people for longer will not address the real problems in our society. Social justice will. We demand health care, housing, and education. End poverty and racism now!

Facts compiled by the Prison Activist Resource Center in cooperation with Oberlin Action Against Prisons

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Women in Prison in the US: the Facts

1. There are nearly 900,000 women currently under correctional supervision in the US. Approximately 15% are confined to prisons and jails (*BJS Sourcebook*).

2. There are now 46 women on Death Row nationwide. Almost half had a history of abuse and are there for the murder of an abusive spouse or lover, most often in defense of their lives and the lives of their children.

3. Self-defense is involved approximately 7 times more frequently when women kill men than when men kill women. According to the *Sourcebook for Criminal Justice Statistics*, 55% of all women will be raped and/or physically assaulted in their lives. Over one-half of all women murdered are killed by a spouse or partner.

4. In some surveys, 90% of battered women who reported assault to the police actually signed complaints, but fewer than 1% of the cases were ever prosecuted.

5. Women are the fastest growing sector of the [illegible] population. Since 1980, the female inmate population nationwide has increased more than [illegible] (*Bureau of Statistics 1998*). But this is not due to increases in more serious criminal behavior [illegible] women were sent to prison for nonviolent crimes roughly 49% of the time. In 1986, women were sent to prison for nonviolent crimes roughly 59% of the time. Currently, women are sent to prison for nonviolent crimes nearly 80% of the time (*Bureau of Prisons population report*).

6. 80% of imprisoned women have children and [illegible] women, 70% are single mothers. Prior to their imprisonment, 84.7% of female prisoners (as compared to [illegible] of male prisoners) had custody of their children.

7. Women prisoners spend on average 17 hours a day in their cell with 1 hour outside for exercise. Male prisoners spend on average 15 hours a day in their cell with one-and-a half hours outside.

8. Mothers in prison are less likely to be visited by their children than are fathers because women are shipped to other counties or remote areas of a state more often than men, and because children of incarcerated parents are often moved for foster care.

9. A survey conducted in 38 states revealed that 58% of the prisons or jails serve exactly the same diet to pregnant prisoners as to others and in most cases do not meet the minimum recommended allowances for pregnancy.

10. In early 1998, 2,200, or 3.5%, of all female state prisoners were HIV-positive (*US Bureau of Justice*). Incarcerated HIV infected women have no access to experimental drug trials, compassionate use and new drug protocols.

Facts compiled by the Prison Activist Resource Center
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For more info, see our web site: www.prisonactivist.org

Abolish Prisons

A Prison Abolition Conference is being organised for Saturday 26th January, 2002 at Conway Hall. For more info or to help out, send SAE to Prison Abolition Conference, c/o BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX.

Antiprison

Anarchist info-service with news and information on political prisoners and state repression
E-Mail : antiprison@lycos.com Website: www.geocities.com/antiknast (Another interesting site: www.anarchistblackcross.org) News: www.groups.geocities.com/group/antiprison

Prisoners All!

There are 2 million prisoners in the U.S. It's just about the only "industry" that is adding American workers, besides the bombs manufacturers and the military body snatchers. Over a million of these people are in for doing nothing! They got sucked into the prison-industrial system by the kidnappers on the streets - the police - and railroaded into prison for non-violent "crimes" cooked up by fat, white male lawyers in state capitols and Washington.

Meanwhile, their gauleiters and fuhrers are overseeing the starvation, torture and murder of thousands of children and their families - EVERY SINGLE DAY!!! The U.S. rulers train and arm death squads, prop up dictators, deny food and medicine to the desperate and bomb the piss out of civilian workers and peasants in Europe and Africa, itching to unleash World War III, in their self-righteous ultra megalomania! There's your CRIMES, folks!

A lot of people are imprisoned due to the "War on Drugs." In colonial times, it was illegal NOT to grow hemp, so damned useful is this miraculous and medicinal plant.

A lot of the hard drugs, heroin and cocaine ARE harmful to citizens and that's why the CIA, the government and big business are so heavily involved in trafficking in them! The "Drug War" is a war on us - the citizens of America. These drugs are shoved down our throats and then we're jailed for being victimized by them! It's really a war on sanity, a war on life and a war on the future. The Spanish fascists had a favorite slogan - "Long Live Death!" The Amerikan Nazis slogan can be called "Long Live Hyper War and World-Wide Genocide!"

Enough about the Amerikkkan Himmlerites, Clinton & Albright & Co. I came here tonight to talk about our brothers and sisters in the U.S. gulags and how we can help them.

Amidst all the genocidal repression, the American people are largely deaf, dumb and mute - frightened and poisoned by the scream of vacuous culture and lying, big brother media. Why is that??? I'll tell you why! It's because almost all of the courageous and the brilliant have been gunned down or locked down. The human examples we are so desperate for, are in prison ALREADY!



The cops, the lawyers, the judges, the politicians, the generals, the jailers and the CEO's know this. They make it next to impossible for conscious prisoners to speak, write, organize, receive material or communicate in any way. It's like a severe child abuse household, with the children being bound, gagged, shackled and chained inside the doghouse without human warmth, fed garbage and regularly beaten and raped. That's the U.S. prison system!

But the human spirit is indominable and courageous. Prisoners manage to patiently and meticulously educate us anyway, in spite of being forced to endure a Dantesque daily nightmare. We owe it to them - and to OURSELVES! - to do as much as possible to support them.

Because, rub your eyes, WE'RE ALL PRISONERS!!!

SLAVERY WITH A NEW NAME

"Slavery is being practiced by the system under the color of law. Slavery 400 years ago, slavery today. It's the same thing, but with a new name. They're making millions and millions of dollars enslaving blacks, poor whites, and others – people who don't even know they're being railroaded."

– Political Prisoner Ruchell Magee

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as a punishment for crime* whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

– 13th amendment to the US constitution

The 13th amendment to the US Constitution, usually thought to have abolished slavery, actually codified it.

Most prisoners do work of some sort, whether it be for the prison they're incarcerated in, a state or federal agency, or a private company. Most of these jobs are low skill, such as cleaning the prison, or making uniforms or furniture for a state agency or Unicor (the federal agency that supplies furniture and other materials to the federal government and a handful of private companies).

While relieving the daily monotony of prison life, most prison jobs do not teach skills that will help prisoners once they are released. The majority of this work has no demand on the outside—almost all of these low wage jobs have moved to Latin America, the Caribbean, and South East Asia.

Low Wages

While wages vary from state to state, CA prisoners receive "minimum wage" ($5.75), 80% of which is taken by the state:

20% to victims rights organizations
20% into a state restitution fund
20% to anti drug campaigns
20% to an inmate "trust" fund
leaving 20% to the prisoner

So the actual wage of a CA prisoner is a high $1.15 an hour. With everything from toothpaste to phone calls to medical treatment grossly inflated, prisoners actually get to keep little of what's left. Many prisoners make under $.20 per hour, and some don't get paid at all.

Unsafe, Unfair, Inhumane

The conditions for working prisoners are among the worst in the industrialized world. There are no benefits, no vacation, no decent health care, no safety standards, and prisoners are not allowed to form a union. Severe repression and longer sentences result from a refusal to work. Prisoners are beaten, put in solitary confinement, or both. There is no oversight of prison labor conditions, and no accountability, so prison officials have no incentive to provide safe working conditions or treat prisoners humanely.

Enter Private Companies

Illegal for many years, private companies employing prisoners directly was again made legal in the mid '70's. This arrangement is attractive for corporations because they pay about the same or less as they would in Mexico, but they use the Made in USA label. Prisons and corporations are very reluctant to release details, but we do know that in 1983 about 1000 prisoners were working for private companies, and by 1998 that number had risen to 2500 prisoners working for 135 companies. Currently many prisons are reorganizing themselves in order to accommodate private companies. If we don't stop the trend, this number is going to skyrocket.

This creates a very dangerous dynamic. Large corporations, with a lot of help from the media and politicians, have a strong interest in creating a larger and larger prison population, so that they can have a larger cheap labor pool. This results in increased sentences, and the increasing criminalization of large blocks of society (mostly low income people and people of color).

All this is not to say that prisoners should not work. Prisoners should have the same right to work as people on the outside. They, like their counterparts on the outside, need to have safe, meaningful work, decent pay, and the right to organize or unionize.

Some of the companies that profit from exploitation of prison labor:

McDonald's	Motorola
[illegible]	[illegible]
Texas Instruments	AT&T
[illegible]	[illegible]
Kaiser Steel	Eddie Bauer
[illegible]	[illegible]
Microsoft	Boeing
[illegible]	[illegible]
Pierre Cardin	Nordstrom
[illegible]	Justens

BRIGHTON ABC

Brighton ABC have moved website to; www.brightonabc.org.uk Also, a new postal address; Brighton ABC, PO Box 74, Brighton BN1 4ZQ. For prisoners who cannot send mail to PO Box addresses, the old address will be kept as backup; Brighton ABC, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY.

CHATTANOOGA 3

The Chatanooga 3, Lorenzo Komboa Ervin, Damon McGee and Mikail Musa Mohammad need funds for their appeal to:
Account #7515108434, Old Kent Bank, 4705 W Main St, Kalamazoo, MI, USA. If paying in sterling, to; Haringey Solidarity Group, PO Box 2474, London N8. Updates/messages direct to/from Lorenzo: komboa@hotmail.com

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PUBLISHER & DISTRIBUTOR
P.O. BOX 721
HOMEWOOD, IL 60430

"Like the Goddess of the Hunt, in Full Cry"

by Jane Doe:
www.janedoesociety.com; click on members to get to Just Cause for Legal Revolution

May 8, 2000. Chicago. "Like the Goddess of the Hunt, in full cry." This is a quote made by Joseph K., as played by Anthony Perkins in Orson Welle's genius version of another genius' (Kafka) story. *The Trial.* Genius meets genius and the effect is not additive, but exponential, and you see that clearly when you watch Welles' movie.

Hunting humans and/or their possessions. This is what our justice system is really about -- one group of people at the top of the human food chain hunting all others.

Those at the bottom, the weakest and most dispossessed of us, get it in the criminal courts. Go into the criminal courts and the jails, see who's there and there by the millions. Blacks, hispanics, poor whites, social activists. Only lately has it become more and more some middle-class drug users. American blacks are talking about their youth "disappearing". Disappearing to where? To the U S A. gulags and concentration camps, that's to where.

The wealthy, those at the top with the economic strength to resist slave like imprisonment get it in the civil and chancery courts.

Those of us in the middle get caught up too, sometimes through domestic disputes and low level and/or vice crimes like drugs, sometimes through divorce, bankruptcy, probate courts, etc., but mostly it's now our turn for the gulags, as the gulags continue to grow but are running out of blacks, Hispanics and poor whites.

The hunters, the lawyers and judges, have made themselves immune and virtually "ungettable" through self-serving laws granting to themselves immunity which they've abused to become totally lawless. Through their secretive, brotherhood organizations that supposedly police their own but actually cover-up for their own, there just aren't many recourses against these lawless thugs. Meanwhile, to this day, they've got the "bush-wa's" thinking they're totally on the up and up -- providing us with the "best justice system in the world". Please. Best for whom? And, they're seldom if ever the hunted. Yet. I expect they will start hunting each other the moment they run out of us ordinary citizens to track down.

In order for us to obtain our promised and guaranteed rights to freedom and liberty, this power equation must change. We have got to stop being the prey and turn into the predators. How do we do such a thing?

I have lots of ideas, as do plenty of other people, but getting them translated into action would require nothing short of a new American Revolution. One is in order, RIGHT NOW. But, those of us who are hypnotized into thinking that we're not of the "hunted" now or soon to be of the hunted later, well, we'd rather watch TV or go see the Cubbies than fight for our freedom from these lawless thugs assuming safety and power under the color of the law.

Maybe when our numbers reach 6 million of us in jail and prisons, the average guy who can't wait to go shopping, sporting or drinking will be interested in taking action to keep himself or his loved ones out of the clutches of the hunters.

Recently becoming captured prey myself in a bad faith criminal misdemeanor case, "Harassment by Telephone", I've fought. The hunters don't like that on one level, yet on another level certainly do. They're bored with the roll-overs. They're a little curious to see what an "attack rabbit" can possibly do to big powerful them.

This attack rabbit thinks, probably not a whole lot here and now. Although she's sure they're not happy at being turned into the feds, their brother organizations and to the media, neither are these methods enough to get them to behave morally or lawfully in her case or anybody else's.

This attack rabbit does though believe in cosmic justice, and on that realm – guess who's prosecuting whom? Witnessing against whom? Judging whom? And who will be the beggars on their knees before the Heavenly Gates crying out for justice and mercy?

Eternity is a right not a privilege, and the Cosmic Realm does visit its justice upon us. This certainly is the only thing keeping me from sinking into despair as I watch this country de-evolving well into its concentration camping stage, accompanied by a rare few of us out there fighting this obscenity, this highly organized and engineered crime against humanity. Yes, Eric Zorn, columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*. It IS Nazism. Engineered fascism, unbridled authority and privilege. A helpless, oppressed for centuries underclass deprived of all human rights. They're taking us by the hundreds in vans instead of by the thousands in trains. They're taking us over a long period of time instead of an intense few years. Still, they're taking us and class and race are the determining factors. The so-called abolishment of slavery never happened. It was moved into the prisons, where it became invisible and yet highly supported by the people. If you read the 13th Amendment, you will see that this amendment legalized slavery. Just convict someone of a crime, now you have the right to make him a slave. After the so-called abolishment of slavery, criminalization of citizens began in earnest and is in its prime growth stages today. These aren't prisons. They aren't facilities. These are concentration camps. Economic centers of production. Liberate the Concentration Camps of America!

Pro Se Defendant Subpoenas Prosecutors and a Judge
and on International Workers' Day
She Bombards Boss Complainant's Office with Subpoenas

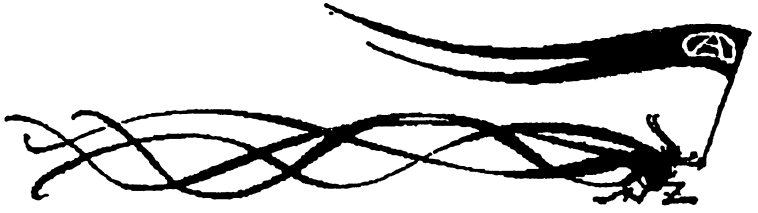
Press Release Contact: Gale Ahrens aka Jane Doe, 773-227-9388. www.janedoesociety.com: click on members to find Pro Se Case

May 8, 2000. Chicago. In the telephone harassment case against her going to trial soon, an activist who calls herself Jane Doe, representing herself Pro Se, subpoenaed about 15 employees of the complainant boss, Adam Maclean, of Wrox Press on May 1, 2000 and she has also subpoenaed the prosecutors and judge involved in an illegal incarceration against her during preliminary hearings. "May 1st is International Workers' Day, so I thought this would be an appropriate time to serve these exploiters. The significance of the timing will no doubt be lost on them. Societal responsibility just isn't in the Wrox business plan."

"Just a little harmless prosecution? I don't think so," says Doe. "These prosecutors and judges are rabid mad dogs. They got this way because nobody ever fights them back. Now there are two million of us with broke lives, disappeared in America's burgeoning and biggest growth industry: the prison industrial, legal slavery complex. Two million of us disappeared in our gulags. Four million more of us are in their claws as well, o probation or parole. These numbers aren't even the whole picture when you count the millions more given "state on leave" like they wanted to do with me in my case. And when you count immigrants and juveniles the system is warehousing in "detention centers" or other types of institutions. Politicians and criminologist lead us to believe all "criminals" are John Wayne Gacey's. Those working the (in)justice system have given themselves immunity in every aspect you can think of. The judicial branch of government doesn't even fall within the Freedom of Information Act. Prosecutors and judges operate in secrecy and charge the rest of us with impunity. They're subject to drug abuse programs. We're subject to long prison terms for exhibiting th same behavior. When prosecutors and judges realize they've done the wrong thing, they refuse to back off. These are superpredators and it's time they were stopped. How? Certainly not by encouraging people like A Gore, who panders to fear of crime that first he and his slimy ilk along with the dominant media manufacture. Gore's got new, grand ideas of drug testing every prisoner and probationer and parolee twice a week. Who's getting those contracts? Clinton did as much and more to ensure we're a police state as any Republican. Yet, when he commits crimes, he gets off."

Jane Doe's trial on criminal charges for telephone harassment is scheduled for May 15, 2000 at 9 a.m. at 1340 S. Michigan Avenue, Courtroom 501. This is a result of her fighting her wrongful termination by Maclean of Wrox Press Inc. with activism over lawyerism. "Nothing's more harassing than dealing with lawyers and lawsuits ... no war gets any dirtier than the wars fought in our courts. Adam's too arrogant and dense to realize that I have been doing him a favor. Too bad for him," Doe says as she points to a wrongful termination legal precedent of a salesman winning $136,000,000 in damages.

During preliminary hearings of Doe's harassment case, the state went on leave. Doe demanded trial. The state caused an illegal incarceration of Doe when a substitute judge was holding court and Doe was there just to observe court proceedings. Doe turned them into their brother organizations that did nothing, as she expected, and she turned them into the Feds. At one time a settlement offer was dangled in front of her and then a week later pulled back. At one time she was told she had a right to compel the complainant to give up home addresses of people she planned to subpoena and then later she was denied this. Most of her substantive motions were denied a hearing until first day of trial. "Some due process," Doe says. "They're treating me like I'm guilty until proven guiltier. Charged murderers get more due process than what I've been given. No wonder these days no one thinks you're innocent until proven guilty. With more than one-half of all death-row inmates in Illinois later found innocent, thinking people have wondered what's going on in the lesser cases. I can show them."



Doe is demanding competent prosecution and that the state enforce the law against Maclean, who broke Illinois Employment Law when he fired her without giving her commissions earned among other monies -- a violation subject to a charge of a Class C Misdemeanor for each day of the offense -- May 15 will mark 316 days Maclean has withheld payment -- except the State's Attorney refuses to accept the complaint or information from Doe and a prosecutor hung up the phone on her while she was questioning how she can make a complaint. "Go to the police and SLAM was their answer even though the police had kicked me out of their stations for doing so," Doe says.

"The Court keeps calling Adam's employment theft a civil matter. Since when is a Class C misdemeanor a civil matter? Maybe since the time it became better to receive a felony than a misdemeanor. (This is something Cook County State's Attorney Richard Devine actually said while arguing for tougher gun laws.) Maclean steals thousands from me and it's a civil matter. I protest against this son of a bitch, and it's a crime and I face charges and punishment including possible jail time, wherein if I'm railroaded into being found guilty -- that's the only way they can win because they can never prove intent that was never there -- I'll probably get jail time instead of "community service" for daring to take on these superpredators. Some people have advised me to appeal prior to the trial since my rights are being denied. I decided against it. I want this judge to bear ultimate responsibility in the only court that really matters, the highest court there is and that's the one where you're eye to eye with God, explaining your life and your actions."

"If we'd all go before these rapid dogs off our knees, fighting them and damn the consequence, we would make some progress. Sure, we'll take hits and suffer losses as in any war ... but what's going to happen if we don't? The war is on and we're going willingly just like so many did during Hitler's reign of terror. We've allowed the superpredators to gulag and concentration camp our citizenry -- you can't even go for a drive into the country without passing a prison. What goes on in some of these prisons and control units violates every human rights standard known to man. Those comprising this system are superpredators. They are on the hunt. They are hunting us. Their prey of choice is poor blacks and Hispanics, but they're moving on. Their propaganda machine rivals anything invented by Goebbels. They must be stopped or you or someone you know is next, I guarantee it. And if I'm off to the gulags for saying so and for fighting it, so be it. Will you come visit me?



Jane Doe was convicted for speaking the truth and sentenced to two months in Cook County Jail. I *did* visit her there one day. After she got out, she got back to writing and agitating. She wrote a zine called *Jane Doe at the Justice Front* which is available thru the So. Chi. ABC Zine Distro.

FMC Carswell: Treatment or Vile Negligence?

The Federal Medical Center (FMC) Carswell Hospital in Fort Worth Texas is truly one of a kind. Originally an Air Force base it is now the home of around 1,200 women inmates, the only hospital were federal women can go for treatment in all of the US.

Out of the 1,200 inmates that reside at FMC Carswell approximately 642 are there for medical and psychiatric reasons, though some would claim that the numbers are much higher.

Either which way we want to look at this scale, one question truly remains, that question being are the women at Carswell treated with proper medical care or are they these women treated with vile negligence? Let's first take a look at some grueling statements taken directly from women who've either spent time at the FMC facility or who are currently still there. The first three stories were taken from an interview with an activist woman, Kathleen Rumpf, who spent about 9 months at FMC Carswell:

- One woman (an unarmed bank robber) came in from a car crash that left her with burns over half her body and one leg amputated. She needed special hygienic soap, detergent, lotion and dye-free clothing to keep her fragile skin grafts from becoming infected. This was all deemed "not medically necessary".

- Another woman fought for months just to get a biopsy on a lump in her breast.

- A 32-year old mother of two begged a counselor for help in a hallway in the hearing of several prisoners, the counselor said "You better not be faking it. If you're faking it, you're going in the hole". This woman died the next day.

- A woman suffering from Lymes Disease (in her 3rd stage of the disease) was repeatedly asked to leave the doctors office for about a year for asking what they had planned for her treatment. When finally seen by a doctor it was stated that she was now diagnosed with two additional diseases, Babesiosis and Ehrlichiosis, this was the result of not being properly cared for.

- A 73-year old woman in a wheel chair was down in the surgery unit, she was reported to be immensely bloated (her stomach being the size of a basketball) and was wheeled back to her room where she was left alone in the dark vomiting.

- The same woman with Lymes Disease had also visited the surgery room once on a medical emergency, she stated "They were beyond rude, I wasn't even seen by the doctor".

These are just a few cases that I have put forth, but the list most defiantly goes on, I hope this is enough to make you sick and outraged. Even a



judge, of all people, wrote to Janet Reno stating "this is cruel and unusual punishment".

Being the only medical facility for federal women in the US one would think that these women wouldn't have to endure such negligence. I've personally heard lots of instances where women and men in prison do endure medical neglect, as it too is very common, but to think that a hospital (whether it be federal or not, even though some regular hospitals are neglectful as well) for women prisoners is doing such acts is even more disturbing. These women literally have no where else to go for help, so they must constantly except the fact that the treatment they are getting, whether it be good or bad, is the only treatment for them. They will even continuously tell you "You are getting the best medical care in any community", that's because there is no other medical care for these women. This is there only option, and with that, they (the staff, doctors, etc.) will do as they please knowing that you, the prisoner, can't do anything about it.

Even writing up grievances on how you are being treated will, most of the time, not solve a thing, I've heard of the staff just throwing the complaints out or even saying, "You're wasting your time". Why complain to the abuser when the abuser just doesn't care about the abuse they put you through? The only solution I see feasible is to expose it and confront it, but even then, they just don't seem to listen. I've written numerous letters to the ex-warden J.B. Bogan, Prison Director Kathleen Hawk Sawyer, Chief Janice Thelton Henderson, John Rathmen, the unit manager Ms. Stevens, and many more. I get little to no response or the same old story, that they'll look into it, or that these women are treated with proper medical care, this is flat out bullshit and they know it.

This so-called hospital needs to be exposed for what it truly is, a joke and a fraud. And that as well seems to be the problem, hardly anyone even knows of this hospital or the neglect that the women inside it suffer. You'd think that it being the only federal hospital for women in the US that more people would know of it, but then again, the more it stays hidden, the more they can get away with. But something must be done, no longer should we allow these "doctors" to do as they please as ill women's lives are at stake, prisoners or not, they are sick and in need of real medical care. And I don't believe that letter writings are the ultimate solution, as I feel sometimes it is a waste of time, they don't listen and they don't care, but take it upon yourself to do what you think is right, research and expose it.

In struggle,
Eric/Austin ABC
PO Box 19733
Austin, TX 78760-9733

7. Send all ad material and checks to:
It's About Time Committee
P.O. Box 221100
Sacramento, CA 95822



For conference, updates and info please visit our website: www.itsabouttimebpp.com.

Help War on Drugs prisoner Karen Horning win compassionate release!

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On May 31", after years of medical neglect by federal prison doctors, Karen Horning was denied her request for compassionate release. Karen, who has Lyme disease has already suffered for years from medical neglect by prison doctors. After being misdiagnosed and falsely treated for arthritis, Karen was told that damage to her feet and hands was irreversible and another major attack would destroy what was left of her skeletal frame and that her feet would have to be amputated at the ankle.

A letter campaign initiated by herself from behind bars managed to finally get her to a Lyme specialist who finally gave her a positive diagnosis for Lyme as well as two other tick borne diseases. But despite the diagnosis she has yet to receive adequate treatment and her condition is still deteriorating.

Before her denial of compassionate release, Karen was denied the transfer to FCI Dublin in California to be closer to the 2 Lyme specialists who had seen her before and her home. Then in late June, Karen was verbally denied a halfway house because of her inability to work a 40 hour work week, a direct result of her incarceration.

As a last and desperate resort, Karen is appealing to the judge, who had previously told her he would give her more time if he could. She is asking for people on the outside to write letters to the judge asking she is granted compassionate release.

Karen has been in prison since 1993 for possession of LSD for which she is serving 10 years. Like many prisoners of the drug war Karen is serving hard time in prison for being convicted of a nonviolent and victimless crime.

Prisons are a death sentence for thousands of inmates in the US because of their medical negligence. As the United States prison population soars (now over 2million) out of control, thousands of people are finding themselves facing death at the hands of negligent prison officials.

Please, help Karen Horning win compassionate release! Letters make an especially big impact for prisoners. It was the letters from the outside got Karen to a Lyme specialist after years of struggle. They are a signal that prisoners are not forgotten and disposable.

Chief Justice Thelton and Henderson
Northern District of California
450 Golden Gate Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94102

Remind the judge of Karen's health problems and that she doesn't deserve a defacto death sentence for her nonviolent crime. Ask that she be granted compesionate release or at the very least be given adequate medical attention which she is now lacking. Refer to case no: CR-93-0450-TEH

Senator Diane Feinstein
1 Post Street, Ste 2450
San Francisco, CA 94104

Feinstein said she would investigate Karen's situation, but probably hasn't. Ask that she look into Karen's case and push for compassionate release.

You can write Karen Horning at:
Karen Horning
#00644-049 CC5
FMC Carswell
PO Box 27137
Ft Worth, TX 76127

For more info on Karen Horning, check out http://november.org/wall-KarenH.html or her book: *The Talahassee Project* published recently by Last Gasp and www.drugwarprisoners.org

the defenestrator – PO Box 30922, Philadelphia, PA 19104 – rosa@defenestrator.org - www.defenestrator.org

KAREN HORNING

Karen has been denied her request for compassionate release. Case info., updates, addresses to appeal for her, etc., are at www.drugwarprisoners.org "The Tallahassee Project", a collection of stories and photos of women drug war prisoners by Karen, exposes the effects of the US 'war' on people (try amazon.com or bookshops). Write to her; Karen Horning, #00644-049 CC5, FMC Carswell, PO Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127, USA.

Karen Horning: Released!

Drug war prisoner/political prisoner Karen Horning was sentenced to 10 years in prison in the early 90's (originally a life sentence that was dropped) after a frame up by undercover cops.

Like most, if not all, scenes there's an under cover cop looking to crack down on drug users and/or sellers. Karen was a part of the "DeadHead" crowd and she was pinpointed as an acid dealer by more than one individual, these individuals were being questioned on drug selling to begin with and decided to take the easy route, snitching out Karen who had nothing to do with any of it. But, like some involved in the Deadhead scene, she did have acid on her, so she faced time in prison.

Karen spent many years in prison, more than half of her ten year sentence (I believe 9), the last two-three years she had spent at the FMC Carswell hospital in Ft. Worth, TX (the only hospital for federal women in all of the US), due to her illness of Lyme's Disease. Even while in prison she remained actively involved with the movement, mainly her continued fight to stop the "War on Drugs". So finally after many years in prison, Karen was released from the FMC Carswell hospital on the 22nd of January.

She took a flight back to San Francisco sometime in that afternoon, she is currently living at a halfway house there. If you'd like to contact her I'll leave the address below, I don't know how long she'll be at the halfway house though, she said hopefully not long, as she plans on getting a job and finding an apt to live in. Peace- Eric/ Austin ABC

Karen Horning
111 Taylor Street
San Francisco, CA
94102 USA

Lori Berenson assaulted during move

Lori Berenson is an American currently being held as a political prisoner in Peru. After serving nearly 5 years in harsh jails high in the Andes Mountains, her conviction of treason against Peru and her life sentence were overturned. In June 2001, she was cleared of charges of being a terrorist but convicted of collaboration and sentenced to 20 years by a civilian terrorism court. Lori is 32.

At 3 AM, Dec. 21, 2001, while Lori and 17 other prisoners were sleeping, more than 30 police in gas masks and wielding clubs, stormed her cell block filling the area with tear gas. Lori was overcome by the gas, brutally manhandled and forcefully removed from her cell. She was carried semiconscious, wearing only a t-shirt and shorts, leaving behind all her possessions including eyeglasses, medicines and shoes. The prison she was taken to is on a mountain where the temperature drops to 40 degrees at night. Other women in the cell block were gassed, beaten and threatened with rape.

According to the official who brought Lori her possessions and Lori's lawyer who visited 2 days later, she is okay except for cuts and bruises.

Lori was moved for political reasons. On Dec. 22nd, media articles portrayed Lori in highly negative terms omitting the manner in which she was dragged from her cell. Justice minister Olivera has backing from the Fujimori-Montesinos supporters who still yield a lot of influence within the judiciary, military, police and penal systems in Peru.

After "sitting in limbo" for seven months, Lori's appeal to the Peruvian Supreme Appeals Court was finally heard Jan. 22, 2002. Dr. Sandoval presented Lori's defense to the five-member court panel. The judges will consider the oral hearing and are expected to examine all the files from the court case.

For more information, contact the Committee to Free Lori Berenson, 320 E. 25 Street, #2AA, New York, NY 10010. It is possible to write to Lori. All letters must be in Spanish so the guards can read them and the content cannot be political. Send the letters to the Committee. Visit the website: www.freelori.org.



REMEMBER!
THEY'RE IN THERE FOR US,
LET'S BE THERE FOR THEM.

WARMAKERS

"Why, of course the people don't want war. Why should someone want to risk his life in a war when the best he can get out of it is to come back in one piece? Naturally the common people don't want war: neither in Russia, nor in England, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country."

Hermann Goering (a Hitler Nazi).



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Torture in America

Abuse of Human Rights in the United States

Lecture and Discussion
By
Bonnie Kerness

Where: Simmons College, Room C-103
When: Tuesday April 25th 3:30-5:30

Co-sponsored by: Class of 2001, Student Government Association.
Feminist Union

Bonnie Kerness is the Associate Director of the American Friends Service Committee Criminal Justice Program in New Jersey and the National Coordinator of the National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Prisons. She has been an organizer since the civil rights era when she lived in the South. After moving north in the 1970's, she was active with tenants' rights groups and Vietnam Vets Against the War. She has worked as a professional organizer of gay rights, welfare rights, and for prison reform. She has parented six children.

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE | CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM
972 Broad Street, 6th Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102
973/643-3079 FAX 973/643-8924

US Abuse of International Human Rights Standards

Simmons College
Boston, Massachusetts
April 25, 2000
By Bonnie Kerness

Becky has asked me to share a little of my own history. My early observations of oppression in this country began when I was 12 or 13 watching television and seeing children of African decent my own age in the South being hosed by police and bitten by dogs for trying to go to school. I think it was at that moment that I felt my first unselfish rage.

By the time I was 20, I had moved to Nashville, Tennessee to work in the civil rights movement. By 1965, I was in Memphis working with the James Meredith marches and the NAACP. In 1966, I moved to Knoxville, Tennessee and began working at Highlander Adult Education Center, which was the training school for almost all of the people who were organizers in the South. Rose Parks was trained there, along with Martin Luther King, Kwame Toure (known as Stokley Carmichael), Imam Jahil Al-Amin (known as Rap Brown) and hundreds of others. It was the only place in the South where culturally diverse groups could meet. At one point, the State of Tennessee was investigating all Highlander staff for sedition (which is treason against the State) and we were under court injunction forbidding us to continue training. We were allowed to have musical workshops though, so we sang our way into training. I remember that for each workshop people were assigned to patrol that perimeter of Highlander with shotguns.

I became an organizer and by 1970, I had moved north. I worked either professionally or personally in the Women's movement, the gay movement, the anti-war movement with the Viet Nam Veterans Against the War, and in the Welfare Rights and Housing movements. I went back to school to get my BSW and my MSW in community organizing. In 1976 I began to work with the American Friends Service Committee's Criminal Justice Program. The AFSC is the social action arm of the Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers. They have a 300-year history of commitment in dealing with human rights issues for prisoners. Quakers were actively engaged in the Underground Railroad, which helped move slaves from the South into Northern freedom. They also built, staffed and supplied two amputee hospitals during the Viet Nam War. One was in North Viet Nam and one was in South Viet Nam.

In some sense I've come full circle beginning with civil rights and now working with human rights. To me, the politics of the systems – the welfare system, the public school system, the health care system and the criminal justice system – play a profound role in the lives of the poor in this county. It is hard not to note that the rules and regulations of these systems which affect almost all of us, are created, written, and voted upon by mostly upper class white males whose lives will not be touched by their decisions. Their children do not go to public schools, they do not use public hospitals, they are surely not on welfare, and should they commit a crime, even their prisons are different.

Certainly, in the criminal justice system, the politics of the police, the politics of the courts, politics of the prison system and the politics of the death penalty are a manifestation of the racism and classism which governs so much of the lives of all of us in this country. Every part of the United States criminal justice system falls most heavily on the poor and people of color, including the fact that slavery is still permitted in prisons by the 13th Amendment of the US constitution. Although prison labor is not the focus of our dialogue, involuntary slavery in prisons is real.

I've spent a lot of time with young people in Newark and other inner cities. They tell me that the police feel like an occupation army as if the inner cities are militarized zones. They feel that the courts are used as feeder systems to filter young blacks and Latinos into prisons where their young bodies are worth a

fortune. I've heard people say that the criminal just system doesn't work. I've come to believe exactly the opposite – that it works perfectly as a matter of both economic and political policy.

Prisons are one of the largest growth industries in the US. We live in an age where young males of color have been moved out of a historical state of oppression into one of uselessness in the economic context of this country. They have been discarded as a waste product of the technological revolution, with illegal drugs turning the Ghettoized poor into invalids just as alcohol was introduced to incapacitate the people of the First Nations.

I don't believe that it is an accident that people who are perceived of as economic liabilities have been turned into a major economic asset – for the young male of color who is worth nothing in the country's economy suddenly generates between 30 and 60 thousand dollars a year once trapped in the criminal justice system. Nor do I believe it's an accident that this technological revolution has been accompanied by the largest explosion of building prisons in the history of the world. The expansion of prisons, parole, probation, the court and police systems has resulted in an enormous bureaucracy. This proliferation of the Prison Industrial Complex has been a boon to everyone from architects, plumbers, and electricians to food and medical vendors, all with one thing in common – a pay check earned by keeping human beings in cages. The criminal justice system costs multi-billions of dollars which means that there are a lot of people being paid a lot of money for containing mostly folks of color in cages in human warehouses. The criminalization of poverty is a lucrative business and it seems that we've replaced the social safety net with a dragnet. I doubt that this would be tolerated if we were talking about white folks or rich folks.

For the past 24 years, I have been a human rights advocate for the American Friends Service Committee on behalf of prisoners in the United States. I'd like to share with you some of the voices that I hear during my day:

This is from a letter by a social worker at Utah State prison who writes, "John was directed to leave the strip cell and a urine soaked pillow case was placed over his head like a hood. He was walked, shackled and hooded to a different cell where he was placed in a device called "the chair"....he was kept in the chair for over 30 hours resulting in extreme physical and emotional suffering."

Another writes on behalf of a man in Arizona. He describes him being placed in a restraint chair. He was stripped naked and placed in the chair with his buttocks several inches below his knees. His arms and legs were then cuffed and shackled to the legs of the chair to prevent him from moving. He was left uncovered and unprotected in pain for over 24 hours. Mobility was non-existent. He couldn't relieve himself without soiling himself..."

From Florida, "during the struggle jailers shocked Norberg multiple times with stun guns. Inmates who witnessed his death estimate that he was shocked between eight and twenty times. The medical examiner put it at 22 times...."

From Texas, "I was sprayed with so much gas that I lost consciousness. I was kept naked this way for 8 or more hours."

From Delaware, "I was sprayed starting from the left side of my face to the right side and back again. I was blind for about 15 minutes. Another kind of spray caused me to vomit. I was told that prisoners 30 feet away began to vomit."

From Colorado, "I was sprayed with pepper spray and it was 10 hours before I was allowed to wash. This resulted in burns and blisters to my arms, face, chest and feet. For the entire 10 hours I felt like I was being boiled alive. When you are forced to stand in the sun with no shelter, the sweat from your body continues to reactivate this chemical agent so that you remain in extreme pain."

A woman in Texas writes "the guard sprayed me with pepper spray because I wouldn't take my clothes off in front of five male guards. Then they carried me to a cell, laid me down on a steel bed and took my clothes off. They left me in that cell with that pepper spray in my face and nothing to wash my face with. I didn't give them any reason to do that. I just didn't want to take my clothes off.

From another woman who says "I'm tired of being gynaecologocally examined every time I'm searched". Other women report use of restraints on pregnant and sick prisoners. Some have reported giving birth while being handcuffed and shackled.

Some of the most poignant letters I get are from prisoners writing on behalf of mentally ill prisoners – like the man in California who spread feces over his body The guards' response to this was to put him in a bath so hot it boiled 30% of the skin off his body. Article 1 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture prohibits "physical or mental pain and suffering, inflicted to punish, coerce or discriminate for any reason". Practices such as the indefinite use of shackles and other mechanical restraints, and the administration of dangerous chemical treatments, or the practice of extended isolation cannot be justified. These practices put the US in violation of United Nations Treaties and Covenants, whic it has signed. For those of us dealing with this kind of oppression on a daily basis, use of the UN Covenants and Treaties has enormous potential because it is international law. For the first time ever, human rights groups such as Amnest International, the World Organization Against Torture, Human Rights Watch and Prison Watch Internationale have all reported on the persistent and widespread pattern of human rights violations in the US. The American Friends Service Committee has been a contributor to each of those reports.

These past years have been full of hundreds and hundreds of calls and complaints of an increasingly disturbing nature from prisoners and their families throughout the United States. Most describe inhumane conditions including cold, filth, callous medical care, extended isolation sometimes lasting over a decade, use of devices of torture, harassment, brutality and racism.

I have received vivid descriptions of four point restraints, restraint hoods, restrain belts, restraint beds, stun grenades, stun guns, stun belts, tethers, waist and leg chains and air tasers.

The use of extended isolation has also been a growing concern for many prison activists, both inside and outside the walls. The reports coming in about the use of devices of torture have largely been from isolation units, which are called control units or supermax prisons, where there are few witnesses. In New Jerse

prisoner Ojore Lutalo has been held in the Management Control Unit in total isolation since February 4, 1986. He has never received explanation for this. He is let out for an hour and a half every other day. He has basically been told that he is being kept in sensory deprivation because of what he "could do if he wanted to". Ruchel Magee lived under these conditions in California for more than 20 years. Russell Shoats has been living in various Pennsylvania isolation units for 17 years.

There are thousands of others as well. The monitoring that the American Friends Service Committee has done leads us to believe that approximately 10 per cent of the US prison population lives in some form of extended enforced isolation. The prisoners tell me that the silence is eerie and that the conditions of confinement are torture. Picture yourself living in a cage the size of your bathroom for 15 years. You are placed in a literal human warehouse where you will stay 24 hours a day, day in and day out, year in and year out. In the more progressive units, you may be allowed into a bare concrete yard for exercise twice a week. Mail and reading material are censored. When you leave your cage, you are strip-searched which often includes a pointedly humiliating anal probe. You are shackled around your waist and handcuffed. You are entirely under the control of guards who carry long, black clubs they refer to as "nigger beaters".

Many of us trace the development of control units to the tumultuous years of the civil rights movement when many activists found themselves in US prisons. Sensory deprivation as a form of behavior modification was used extensively with imprisoned members of the Black Panther Party, Black Liberation Army formations, Puerto Rican independentistas, members of the American Indian Movement (AIM), and white radicals. In later years we found jailhouse lawyers, Islamic militants and prisoner activists placed in extended isolation. It is no surprise that Ojore, Ruchell and Russell Maroon Shoats are all connected in some way to either the Panther or BLA formations. In 1976, Andrew Young who was the US Ambassador to the United Nations, noted the existence of US political prisoners. With the exception of the recently released Puerto Rican political prisoners, those folks are still in prisons throughout the country over 25 years later.

Right now, the latest explosion filling the isolation cages include youth of color imprisoned as a result of the racist crack-cocaine laws. And of all the people that I've seen in these units over the years, these youngsters are the most ill prepared for the torment of endless isolation. Current efforts to expand the solitary confinement population involve the alleged spread of gang problems in US prisons. While most of us working for prisoner rights know gangs exist in prisons, we also know this problem is sometimes created and enhanced by prison authorities. In New Jersey, the Department of Corrections recently built a 720 bed gang unit —supermax style. I have been monitoring New Jersey prisons for 24 years. Although New Jersey has prison gangs, it has never had a gang problem This trend is being repeated throughout the country, resulting in the increased building of supermax prisons. In these gang prisons called Security Threat Gang Management Units, prisoners are called upon to renounce their "gang" membership -- which for some of us is reminiscent of the witch-hunts which went on during the McCarthy investigations in this country in the 1950's.

Corrections personnel have told me that the national-wide move to expand the use of isolation is fostered by the guard unions. These unions are contributing heavily to the political campaigns of law and order candidates. Guards reportedly feel that these types of sensory deprivation units provide a safe working environment. I believe that isolation units also provide them with a place in which to engage in unwitnessed torture.

Add to all of this the United Nations Treaty positions on the racially biased death penalty, physical and sexual abuse of women in prisons, abuse of the mentally ill, abuse of prison labor, people dying under privatized medical care, violation of children's rights and shocking treatment of people being held in INS detention centers and you have a picture of US violations human rights continues. All of these practices go on daily and they sit ty in the face of at least a dozen and a half of the international and regional human rights Treaties and Covenants to which the US is a signatory.

In recent years, the US government has been justifiably critical of the practice of some foreign governments, such as China, of using the prison population as a source of forced, under-paid laborers. What is not so widely understood is that similar practices occur in the US under conditions that amount to prohibited forced labor. At a prison facility in Texas, for instance, employers of prisoners include a circuit board assembler, an eyeglass manufacturer and a maker of valves and fittings. At least two of these companies have closed their factories and now rent factory pace in the prisons for $1.00 per year. Once again, these practices violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention Against Torture, The International Covenant on Civil and Political rights and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

There is no way to look into any aspect of the prison or the wider criminal justice system in the US without being slapped in the face with the racism and white supremacy that prisoners of color endure. There is often little hesitation on the part of Departments of Corrections to acknowledge that guards who are Klan members are active in prisons. The Prison Industrial complex now imprisons almost 2 million people, a proportionately larger amount than any other country in the world. Between 65 and 85 per cent of those the US imprisons are people of color. On any given day one out of four Black males are under some form of social control.

If you are a young black male of color in this country, and you are poor, should you get arrested (a very likely occurrence), your bail will be set so high you become an economic hostage. For you the "phrase innocent until proven guilty" has no meaning. You may sit in a cell for months without having been found guilty of anything. You will certainly not get a trial by a jury of your peers. You will be defended by a public defender who has a caseload so vast you cannot possibly be treated as a priority. And finally, you will serve a sentence which is 30 per cent longer than a Caucasian would receive for the same crime. If you have seen the same thing happen to your father, your uncles, your cousins – if you look around at the broader picture of what is happing to men, women, youth and children of your nationality, it is not hard to conclude that genocide is being committed.

The United Nations definition of genocide is a) the killing of members of a racial or religious group b) the causing of serious bodily harm to members of a

particular group c) deliberately inflicting on a group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within that group and e) forcibly transferring children of that group to another group.

If we use this definition, it is not hard to see how the mass imprisonment that is occurring fits that definition. Coupled with data on high infant mortality, early death of the elderly of color, lack of the same medical treatment, opportunities and education that is afforded to whites, and the realization becomes even more compelling.

The folks in prison are mostly poor and working class who need jobs and education. United States prisons also serve as housing for vast numbers of the mentally ill, just as they serve to hold a huge drug dependent population which desperately needs treatment. Prison issues are race and class issues. The crippling of our poor, of our young people of color in US prisons is expanding, and none of this is about the rate of crime – which has dropped dramatically. It is about capitalism and it is about racism. It is about a culture of greed and a culture which fears the joy of diversity.

I want to read you something from a memorandum written by the Investigative Services Unit at Pelican Bay State Prison, a control unit prison in California. In it they are reviewing a prisoners central file and they comment, "this memorandum refers to the subjects correspondence with Bonnie Kerness who acts as a mail drop for prisoners and militant organizations throughout the United States. The Prison News Service...organized by Bonnie Kerness has been identified as the newsletter for the Black Guerilla Family.....That memo goes on for three pages with its distortions and mistruth. . I have half a dozen other, similar intelligence memos about me from various government entities. I have been followed, and have had men in dark suits sitting outside my house on a number of occasions.

To me oppression in the United States is a very real thing. The FBI has an ongoing program called COINTELPRO, which stands for Counterintelligence Program. That program which began in the 60's was designed to disrupt or destroy groups, which the FBI considers to be politically objectionable. I have seen activists and dissidents from my generation killed by police, the State Troopers and the National Guard. I've also seen them imprisoned as a result of COINTELPRO. I have seen the lives of their children and families destroyed. It is not surprising to me that those of us that speak out on behalf of prisoners, or in opposition to government policies find ourselves under some form of government surveillance.

I believe oppression is a condition common to all of us who are without the power to make the decisions that govern the political, economic and social life of this country. We are victims of an ideology of inhumanity on which this country was built. I have come to believe that the politics of the police, the politics of the courts, the politics of the prison system and the politics of the death penalty are the politics of social control. I believe that this affects every one of us in ways that are a call to activism.

You may be going into fields where you will confront oppressive policies and oppressed people. It would be good if you recognized your own oppression as well. None of us in this room owns the means of production in this country anymore than the homeless person on the streets.

Twenty-four years ago if you had interviewed me I would have fought any implication of torture in the United States. I would have fought the notion of US political prisoners. I would have fought any notion of a prison system that looks suspiciously like the system of slavery.

If we dig deeper into the US practices that I've talked about, the political function that they serve is inescapable. Police, the courts, the prison system and the death penalty all serve as social control mechanisms. The economic function they serve is equally as chilling. Many people with whom I work believe that prisons are a form of neo-slavery.

Prisons reflect both the structure of society and the nature of the struggle against that structure. The wall of silence that has been build around prisons and prisoners has got to be broken down. What I have described is a conscious attempt to physically, mentally and spiritually break down millions of people, and for the most part it is going on unchallenged. The American Friends Service Committee has become so concerned that we are currently archiving prisoner testimonies of torture state-by-state. We've produced a "Survivor's Manual written by prisoners living in extended isolation for prisoners living in extended isolation. We're developing a pamphlet on testimonies of torture in order to be able to put human faces on what is happening. We're also asking prisoners to draw what they are seeing and experiencing. Some of those drawings have already been used by newspapers who find that they can't get into the isolation prisons to photograph. As an activist it is my job to expand the level of popular understanding of what is happening in this country's justice system and make it relevant to the lives of the people that I may touch.

I have been part of the struggle against oppression in this country for the past 35 years. I have seen the horror and havoc that US policies can create with people's lives. I have never seen anything like what I am seeing now in United States prisons. I have spent time with US political prisoners. I have spent time with people who have endured torture in US prisons. I have treated hundreds of ex-prisoners who have returned to our communities with symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress. My soul is shaken by what I read in my daily mail. What is going on in the name of all of us needs to be looked at very carefully. I think that whites have to consciously wash off the racism that infects us daily in a society where we are privileged in relation to peoples of color. I think people of color have to become specifically involved in fighting the bottom line expression of racism and oppression that the prison system represents.

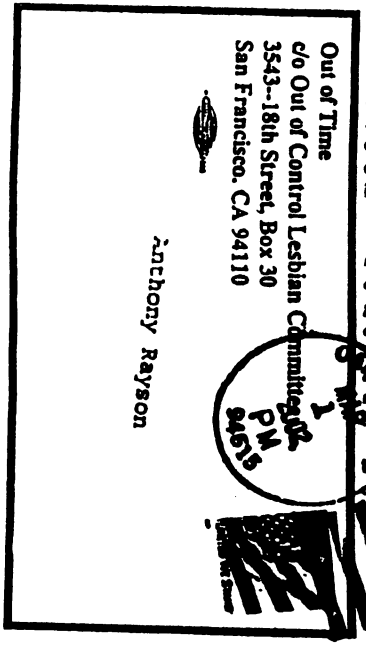
Thomas Jefferson wrote that, "single acts of tyranny can be ascribed to the accidental opinion of the day, but a series of oppressions, begun at a distinguished period and pursued unalterably through every change in ministers too plainly proves a deliberate, systematic plan of reducing us to slavery." He described well the United States prison system.

Prejudice rarely survives experience. I hope that one of the things borne of events such as this is a far more critical look at yourselves, your families and your society. In a genuinely multi-cultural society, the current criminal justice system would not survive.

Thank you.

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

UPDATE FROM MOVE WOMEN



In a letter to OOT, political prisoner Debbie Sims Africa, of the MOVE organization reported on their recent legal setbacks. She also responded to our inquiry about the impact of September 11 on the MOVE prisoners. Debbie Sims Africa, along with other MOVE prisoners has been incarcerated since 1978, after a police attack on their organization. Mumia Abu Jamal covered the trial of the Africas, bringing national attention to their cause. Mumia was arrested in 1982. In 1985, Philadelphia Mayor Rizzo ordered the bombing of the home of other MOVE members, killing 11 including children. Debbie writes:

...As far as the September 11 attack affecting us, it did affect us in a very realistic way and dreadful aftershocks, because it made me think of my own family who was bombed, burned alive, on May 13th, 1985, by the US government, so I connect with what these people are feeling. The amount of people who died September 11 was a bigger amount, and so it seems like a worse situation, but still the same. Lives were lost in a terrible way, treacherous way in both situations. We just thank our beliefs for giving us strength to stay strong, focused, and keep going, despite all the obstacles that are before us...

The MOVE prisoners continue to struggle to appeal their sentencing, but thus far their appeals have been denied. They maintain that there is evidence that Judge Malmed was biased against them both at trial and at sentencing, but that these facts have been ignored by the appeal judges.





Merle Austin Africa, #0006306 (R.I.P)
Janet Holloway Africa, #0006308
Janine Phillips Africa, #0006309
Debbi Sims Africa, #0006307
451 Fullerton Avenue
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403-1230

Political Prisoners Need Your Support

DEBI ZUVER DEFENDS HER LIFE; GETS 21 YEARS

On January 7, Sonoma County Superior Court Judge Elliot Daum handed down a 21-year sentence to Debi Zuver, a domestic violence victim who pled guilty to manslaughter in the shooting death of Kim Garloff, Zuver's ex-boyfriend. Garloff repeatedly beat, terrorized and threatened to kill Debi over a two-year period.



In handing down his stunning decision to give Debi Zuver the maximum penalty (11 years for manslaughter plus 10 years for using a gun), Judge Daum ignored the determination by an expert witness that Debi Zuver suffered from "battered women's syndrome" and acted to defend her own life.

The judge also disregarded the fact that only moments before the shooting Kim Garloff had threatened to kill Debi because she refused to give false testimony in his upcoming trial on 3 felony counts of methamphetamine production and sale. (If convicted, Garloff was facing 19 years in prison. Debi was his alibi witness.)

As Debi Zuver was packing her car to flee to a friend's house, Kim Garloff came into her house, locked the door, threw her down on the bed and beat her, threw her against the wall and made repeated threats to kill her.

Garloff then sat down on the couch and said, "Get me my goddamned gun." (Debi had been sleeping with the gun under her pillow ever since she had told Kim's lawyer she wouldn't testify on his behalf.) According to Debi, she got the gun and walked across the room. "I was actually going to give him the gun," she said. "Instead I shot him. I know that if I hadn't shot Kim that night, I wouldn't be here today."

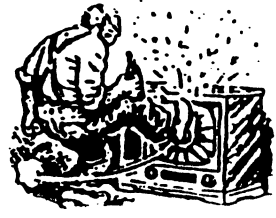


Despite all this, Judge Daum determined the evidence of battered women's syndrome was not convincing; refused to accept that the victim (Garloff) had precipitated and been the aggressor in the incident; and determined she was not acting under duress or in defense of her own life.

This sentence is particularly chilling in light of the recent dismissal of all charges against Petaluma doctor Louis Pelfini, charged with homicide and domestic violence in the smothering death of Janet Pelfini. Louis was Janet Pelfini's husband of some 30 years. Because of double jeopardy, Louis Pelfini cannot be charged again for criminal behavior in Janet's death.

As women's rights activists we are extremely concerned about the messages these two cases send to the community — messages like, "If you kill your wife you'll get away with it" and "If you're a battered woman you better shut up and take it because the cops won't protect you and if you dare protect yourself we're gonna rip your life away."

Letters of support can be sent to: Debi Zuver, c/o Purple Berets, PO Box 3064, Santa Rosa, CA 95402



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Phillip S. Barcia #541365 MN.4717
DeSoto Correctional Institution D-2115
13617 SE Hwy 70
Arcadia, Florida 34266-7800

Anthony Ryron

Dear Mr Ryron:

Greetings from Purgatory. Thank you for your letter dated 1/14/01. Enclosed is a copy of *Notes During A Time of Civil War* for you and Karen Hoffmen to read. As I mentioned in my previous letter, I sat down to write this story for and with Karen in mind. Needless-to-say, she's got first 'dibbs' on it. However, if she's not interested, then I have no qualms with your using it for one of your other projects. If either of you do decide to use it, all I ask is for one or two contributor copies of the issue in which it appears. If both of you decide not to use *Notes*, then I'd appreciate your letting me know ASAP. Celia Bandon at 7-Realms Publishing has expressed an interest in *Notes* for their "*Women At War*" chapbook series, but I've put her off until I hear back from you & Karen.

If in the future you happen to need some solid S/F for one of your zines, you need but ask and I'll see what I can do. Just send me info on the particulars (i.e. theme, word count, deadlines, etc.) so I may better understand your needs.

Please convey my best regards to Mrs. Hoffmen and let it be known that her work is appreciated and admired. I hope I'm able to read more of her thoughts in the future. But, as I'm sure you well-know, this Hell is an extremely encapsulated society and sometimes finding her work is rather difficult. In fifteen more months, though, this will all come to an end ☺. Thank you for you generous offer of sending me a copy of *Prisoner Report*; I will certainly cherish it. In case you're not familiar with Fla. DOC regulations on incoming magazines, the only way they'll allow them in is if it comes directly for the publisher – FYI.

My condolences on the passing of your father on January 8th. It's a strange aspect of life that most of us never fully realize how much we truly appreciate a person until that person is no longer with us – then it is too late. Keep his memory alive, Anthony, and he can never fully die.

Once again, thank you for your letter and offer to middle this project between Karen and myself. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Cordially,

Phillip S. Barcia

Phillip S. Barcia #541365 MN.4717

Notes during a time of Civil War

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Approx. 2,600 Words

THE WEEK AFTER THE SHELLING STARTED AGAIN, we heard that the United Nations wasn't going to send peacekeeping forces in. They still recognize Washington DC as the only official government in what used to be the United States, and if Washington said this was a police action or an ethnic redistribution or whatever, nobody outside the continent was going to argue with them.

But it sure looked like war from where we were, right on the border of the Occupied Zone. And it happened too fast for any of us to comprehend. One day we heard They had taken Dallas, and the next day They were coming down our street with their light tanks and their ugly-green uniforms. Nobody was prepared. How can you be prepared for a thing like that?

They herded us together, the women who were at home on the block, yelling and hitting us with their rifles if we didn't clear out fast enough. I saw Diane Crenshaw pushed out the front door of her house. Her forehead was bleeding and the boy behind her was yelling something about the penalty for looting. She had tried to get a coat and some food to take with her, I think. Actually I don't know what she was trying to get; a coat and food would have been the best things to have, but we didn't know that then. We were dazed, I suppose; some of us barefoot and in housedresses, some of us crying.

Tom, my husband, was at work. I haven't seen him since. The children, most of them, were at school. We haven't been allowed to see them either. They tell us they are being well taken care of, but who knows?

We heard a shot inside Rachel and Mark's house, and Rachel screaming. She's not screaming now. She doesn't talk at all, matter of fact – Bobby Lee, who was too young to start kindergarten this fall, and so shy that he always had a handful of Rachel's skirt clutched in his fingers. We used to tease her that by the time she got Bobby Lee ready for school, every garment she wore would be hand-painted in Kool-Aid and pizza sauce.

There's red on her skirt now, but I can't see if it's a handprint. It doesn't look like Kool-Aid.

Jim Sanders was home. They killed him in front of Sarah. She keeps forgetting what happened, asking where Jim is; then she starts to cry, wipes her eyes and says, "Thank God Sally's away at UT Denton. Denton's not a strategic location, is it? They wouldn't take Denton."

I think if they've got Dallas and Austin, what are the odds they didn't take Denton? Best not to say anything, though. Not to flaunt my luck. Emily was home from school with a cold, so I've got her with me. At least I know she's safe.

I hope Tom escaped when They came through the business district. Some of the younger men were talking about going up in the hills, maybe he went with them, maybe he's not lying dead on a downtown street – I heard they were marching the men out and shooting them in groups, tipping the bodies into the middle of Congress Avenue to be cleared away by bulldozers. Not my Tom, though, surely some of them got away in time. Maybe maybe maybe... who am I kidding? At least Emily is too young and I'm too old to interest them, they took away all the pretty young women like Diane Crenshaw somewhere else, you know what for.

We're at the supermarket on Balcones, all of the women they didn't take somewhere else. All of the ones from our block, maybe from three or four streets; I don't know everyone. They told us to get to work, loading can goods and frozen goods onto dollies, wheeling them out onto the trucks. Where is all the food going? Don't ask. One woman said something and the guard hit her across the mouth with his rifle and she fell down bleeding in the frozen food aisle. We had to step around her to continue work. After a few minutes she got up, slowly, and took her place in the line. Emily stays very close to me, very quiet. Thank God, at ten she is old enough to know when to keep her mouth shut. Perhaps if we do exactly what they say and don't make them angry it will be all right.

I keep saying "the guard," as if pretending he was a stranger would make it better. Actually it's Joe Whatisname, the assistant manager. The man who sold me a book of stamps and a TV Guide last week. Funny, I guess I always knew he was one of Them, but I never thought anything of it. We've been living side by side in peace for so long; if I had thought about it, I would have said we didn't have those kinds of problems here; we're all human beings, we know how to get along with one another.

I guess Joe Whatisname didn't feel the same way about it.

All yesterday we loaded cans and cartons of food and They never gave us anything to eat, though They did let us go to the water fountain and the rest room at the back of the store. One at a time, with a guard. Today Emily whispers that she's hungry. We're working in fruits and vegetables today, not so fresh after last night with the refrigeration units turned off and all these bodies huddled on the floor, heating up the room. I slip her the bits and pieces I find: a cabbage leaf, a broccoli floret, and a whole handful of grapes. I keep one of the grapes for myself. It bursts between my teeth, sweet and succulent and moist. A mistake; now I know how hungry I am. I'm dizzy with it.

Soon all the women are following my example. Sarah Sanders is careless – she crunches a half of a carrot where the guard can hear her, can't pretend not to notice. He shouts and draws his gun and aims it at her. For a frozen moment I think she's going to be killed, then Joe comes running over and tells the boy to put his pistol away. It's going to be all right, I think. Joe is telling him that they are civilized, they don't shoot women. Noncombatants. Prisoners. But he goes on. Rules must be obeyed. Lessons must be learned.

Joe is calm, giving his orders: I can't believe what he's saying. The fluorescent lights overhead flash on his gold-rimmed glasses. Two of the boys in their green uniforms force Sarah to the floor, one kneeling on her shoulders, one holding her ankles apart. I hold Emily close, pushing her face into my stomach, trying to cover her ears as Sarah screams in outrage, shock, and then raw pain. Five of Them, five of Them and none of the rest of us did anything to stop it. We're cowards! I hate us. But what could we have done?

The first few nights I thought I would never be able to sleep on the cold floor. I hadn't thought of myself as old, hardly even middle-aged; but in the mornings my bones ache and I feel like an ancient crone crippled with rheumatism. By now, though, we've just about cleared the entire store, and at night I am so tired I can sleep anywhere, in any position, as long as I feel Emily's soft hair under my hand and hear her regular breathing. Emily is safe. They do feed us now, not enough, never enough, and it's usually half-spoiled, but I pick out the best bits for her. I may not survive this but she will. She must. One of us has to live for all of us. I lie under the bare

shelves and read the signs until I fall asleep: COFFEE, TEA, SOFT DRINKS, SCHOOL SUPPLIES. We should start a school, there are a few children, all girls, but we're so tired at night.

Now, since last week, they come back into the store every night after we've finished with the rice bucket. They point at one, two, three, five of us, and take the women away. The same women night after night for a while, then one night it's a new group and we never know who or why. Rachel was in the first group. In the morning when she came back she wouldn't meet my eyes. We all know now why they take the women, but we don't talk about it. But I was wrong – we are not too old for them.

I wonder what happened to Diane Crenshaw and the other young women?

They took me tonight. The office building behind the supermarket – they're using that for a barracks, and one floor is just for the women. They locked me into an office alone, took the other women farther down the hall.

Now someone's unlocking the door. Oh, good, it was all a mistake, they never meant to –

I can't look at his face. Oh, it hurts more than I thought it would. I'm dry and scared and his hands are clenched tight on my shoulders and he's battering his way into me. I wish I could faint.

It's getting better now. If I stare at the spots on the ceiling I feel nothing. Not the other women, not my own bruised slack body. Nothing. It's as if they had opened a hole inside me and I'm bleeding away through it. Four so far tonight. Don't count, don't think, just get through the night. The key in the lock. And again. How long until dawn? I feel nothing. I could fly away through the window, all my insides have leaked out and left me as light as air, but I must go back for Emily. They haven't broken me yet. There it is again: the key in the lock. It means nothing. You cannot rape nothing.

My week is over: now they're taking other women. Emily was scared but she stayed by Rachel at night, she says, and she knew I'd be back. She knew I wouldn't leave her. No, I

promise. I will never leave you.

Sarah Sanders was in an earlier crew. It broke her. Poor Sarah, she didn't have an Emily to stay sane for. She claims she is pregnant by Them – at her age!

Last night, in the dark, she pried a jagged strip of metal off the edge of a shelf and tried to abort herself. I think she has punctured something; she bleeds and bleeds. Trying to kill a fetus that could never exist, alone in the dark with the pain. "You should have used it on Them," I tell her. They would have punished her, of course, probably killed her outright, but could it have been worse than dying like this? Green pus is oozing out of her body now, we have nothing to wipe it with, and the fever going higher and higher. At least she is warm, somebody says.

It happened before dawn. They took all our watches, so I will never know what time Sarah Sanders died, but it was before dawn. Four days of the fever and pain, and then she shivered all over and died. Lucky Sarah.

Tonight, when They come in, one of Them points at Emily. No! No, there's some mistake. They can't take her. She is such a little girl. My baby. I scream and They pry my hands loose from her wrist. She's crying that I hurt her, holding so tight. Something slams into my head. Blackness, stars. I stagger toward the door. No, no, I cry, take me, not Emily, she's just a baby. I tear my blouse open, shoving sagging breast at them, grimace in a parody of lust. Take me instead, I'll show you a good time, she doesn't know what to do but I'll do anything you want, I know tricks you never dreamed of....

Emily's eyes wide and dark, staring at me, staring at me, staring through me, the last thing I see, such a darkness, those eyes, such a darkness you could fall into and drown. Of course they don't take me instead. Am I such a fool that I still think this is about lust? It is about destroying. Breaking us.

An old woman slaps me, tells me to shut up and stop wailing, they'll bring her back in the morning.

I crouch in a corner, with her in my mind, every step, the doors, the elevator, the long row of offices, the lonely waiting. Now she is hearing the key in the lock.

Emily...

In the morning she comes back, walking stiffly, a little block of ice to be warmed in my

arms. I hold her and sing baby lullabies, feed her sips of the cold rice gruel, beg her to live, to come back to me. She breathes but does not talk. Her eyes are an accusation: you did not protect me.

They come again in the evening and take her; and this time I do not fight or cry. This time I save my strength for what good it may do. For my daughter, whom I cannot protect.

Emily. Emily. Emily.

Sarah Sanders was not having delusions after all. We are all pregnant, the healthy ones, the sick ones, the ones who thought they'd gone through the change of menopause years ago, the little girls. Even Emily is high and round with – what? Too sick, to malnourished, too old, too young, what can we be carrying but death and hatred? No babies can come out of this.

Emily has not spoken for weeks now.

Rachel has miscarried. It killed her. The thing ripped its way out of her body, the monster, the thing that never was, never could have been a baby. Sharp blades, knives with jagged edges poking out of her stomach. It was a nightmare construct of murder, but a weak little one. Somebody stamped on it, reduced it to a crumpled mass of sharp edges that leaked pink fluid. We hid it in the night bucket, pulled Rachel's skirt back over her poor torn body, told Them she died of a fever like Sarah Sanders. All this with no discussion, no argument. We know that They must not find out, though we don't yet know why.

I can feel it moving in my body. And I know now that it wasn't just the miscarriage that killed Rachel; these things kill in being born. Already the growing blades have cut the taut skin of my belly in places; I wake and find new pink stains on my clothes. It is worth it; one last pain, and then I can sleep knowing that I have given birth to Death. We think they will all be born on the same night; we are all growing at the same rate. Death will be born into the world, and we will die. So will They. We will all die together then.

Except Emily. Last night I watched the sharp edges moving and pressing under her smooth young skin as she slept. Then I put my hand over her mouth and nose and leaned down, hard, while her legs kicked. Until they stopped twitching. It was the last thing I could do for her, the last love in me. After all, I had promised: "I will never leave you."

ZINE UPDATE

ZINE REVIEWS

I'm pleased to announce a new (to me) catalog of anarchist/lefty/feminist zines from Illinois. Among the many zines about anarchy and a *huge* section of zines from prisoners is a fairly interesting feminist section. Order or stock the 40-page catalog by sending $2 to South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, PO Box 721, Homewood IL 60430. You can find ABC Zine Distro on the Web at <http://members.xoom.com/thoughtbombs>.

Anthony Grayson of ABC was wonderfully patient with all my questions about discounts and my ruminations on zines in feminist bookstores. His role as a zine distro is certainly not informed by capitalist ideals; he just wants to get the zines into the world. In keeping with that, Rayson prints the addresses of each zine in his catalog so that people can order from ABC or direct from the zine creators. I've also printed the address of each zine creator (when available) for stores that want to order direct. As I mentioned, Rayson distributes a lot of work by prisoners, and he sends many prison zines free to other prisoners. He is also unabashedly anti-copyright (making my publisher sensibilities heckle a bit) and suggests that if a bookstore wants a big order (like 30), he'll just send a master copy so that the store can copy the rest themselves and keep all monies accrued. Which is an awfully nice deal for bookstores. "Zines should be free — like everything else," he says. He also offers discounts to booksellers for smaller orders of five or ten.

From ABC Zine Distro: Cyanide number two, resist psychic death is "72 pages of d.i.y. feminist explosiveness. Lynn is a brilliant, deaf, Chinese, lesbian, violin-playing high schooler who has an ocean of things to say. She's now at university. This baby should be required reading. A zine classic." $2.

Chalm Media Press explores the sexist history of Tampax Inc. and explains the dangers of corporate menstrual products including toxic shock syndrome in The Period Conspiracy. There's also an alternative menstrual product list. Send stamp for zine. Chalm Media Press, 2504 Ravencroft Ct., Virginia Beach VA 23454; email <cooties@rocketmail.com>, <http://cooties.punkrock.ne>.

Breen Casey has produced a passionate and informative zine on everything from prisoner's issues to animal stories to book reviews with Disgusted Life #5. $1. Breen Casey, 3229 Dawson St., Pittsburgh PA 15213.

Witch Hunt is a feminist zine covering a great range of issues. Cari B. does some reprints of articles from other zines, lots of handmade graphics, and some cut-and-paste material in a zine clinic. ABC mentions that Cari also provides a lot of contact info. $2.

(Re)Sisters is a publication from the San Diego State Women's Resource Center, also edited by Cari B. It has a more professional look to it because she was able to utilize the university's resources. Also adamant, full of info and underground graphics. Includes a page of recommended Web sites. $2.

Bikini Kill, the riot grrrl band out of Olympia, has put together Bikini Kill: A Color and Activity Book with information on the band, lyrics, feminist arguments, graphics, contacts, and more. Bikini Kill c/o Kill Rock Stars, 120 NE State #418, Olympia WA 98501.

Body Count/Fem-uh-nist, Summer 1998 is a split zine (two zines in one!). Those involved are self-proclaimed "pistolpackin', tampon-slingin' angry punk rock girls." Articles on everything from "What Do You Call a Woman" to "HIV and AIDS: Get the Facts" to zine, book, and music reviews. Lots of content here for your dollar. Body Count/Fem-uh-nist, Episode 2 is more in-your-face anarcho-feminist writing. Each issue $2. Body Count, 730 Riddle Rd. #208, Cincinnati OH 45220; email <femuhnist@aol.com>. They also distribute. Body Count and many other feminist zines are available from Bitch Distro (see listings below).

Four zines for $1! Insisterhood I, II, III, and IV are passionate arguments about the way male-dominated society and the Christian religion have combined to keep women oppressed. Lots of graphics and contacts for info about rape, assault, and health concerns. All four for $1. Insisterhood, RR#1 Heather Site C-69, Sechelt BC V0N 3A0, Canada.

In Starlight #3, Yael Grauer attacks many enormous and ambitious themes including U.S. militarism, the status of women, Food Not Bombs, the destruction of the environment, overcoming male oppression, police brutality, human rights, and more. Phew! $1. Yael Grauer, Shimer College, Box 500, Waukegan IL 60079.

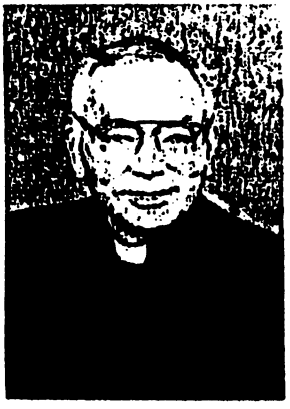
(All of the above zines may be ordered direct — when contact info is provided — or through ABC Distro.)

Feminist Bookstore News

MICHAEL YASUTAKE MEMORIAL

A memorial was held January 12 in Chicago, for the Rev. Dr. Seiichi Michael Yasutake, who died in January at age 81. He was a long time prison activist, a pacifist and Episcopal priest. When he was 21, he refused to fight in WW II and his pacifism never wavered. He educated many people about civil rights violations against the Japanese living in this country and in the 1960's, he helped with voter registration in the south, marched with Martin Luther King and visited war resistors in prison.

Nozomi Ikuta, a minister in the United Church of Christ and the co-chair of Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project (founded by Michael Yasutake), spoke at the memorial and described Michael's activist legacy: "In 1976, as Director of Counseling at the YMCA Community College, Mike hired Carmen Valentine, a decision which would shape the rest of his life. In 1980, she was arrested as a radical fighter for Puerto Rican independence, and Mike spent the next nineteen years visiting her and the other Puerto Rican political prisoners and advocating for their release. In September, 1999, Carmen and ten others were granted clemency by President Clinton, a victory which never would have taken place without Mike s participation in the campaign for their release.



"But Mike's solidarity concerns did not end with the Puerto Rican community. It extended from Asia... to the Caribbean. In November, just a little more than a month before he died, he traveled to Guam as one of the organizers of a conference addressing the human rights concerns of people affected by Japanese or US militarism. Mike clearly loved and served his own Japanese community. But he also insisted on looking beyond his own particular community. For Mike, a neighbor was any one who needed his voice and heart in a struggle against injustice or oppression. Perhaps the clearest evidence of his unfaltering hope was in his insistence that the Church raise a moral voice, even for causes that were not popular or well-known. He was a fixture at General Conventions, introducing resolutions on a variety of human rights issues... most recently, one in support of the Black political prisoner and journalist, Mumia Abu-Jamal....

On the wall, by the entrance of a building important to Mike, there is a quote by Bertolt Brecht that describes Mike's legacy best:

"There are some people who struggle for a day, and they are good.
There are others who struggle for a year, and they are better.
There some who struggle for many years, and they are very good.
But there are those who struggle their whole lives and
These are the indispensable ones."

There's no underestimating the new audience that zines can bring

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