

!ROCK!

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SERVING THE PEOPLE AND THE RETALIATION BY THE OPPRESSORS!

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"The Vanguard party must provide leadership for the people. It must teach the correct strategic methods of prolonged resistance through literature and activities. If the activities of the party are respected by the people, the people will follow the example. This is the primary job of the party..."

- Dr. Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party, an excerpt from: The Correct Handling of a Revolution.

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Revolutionary greetings!

We have finally reached the point at which the oppressors who operate the Texas Department of Criminal Justice can no longer lie and misinform the public when we, the lumpen underclass prisoners, shed light on the ongoing acts of abuse and inhumanity perpetrated against us.

In June 2013 the Minister of Defense for the New Afrikan Black Panther Party (Prison Chapter) Comrade Kevin 'Rashid' Johnson was brought to Texas. Rashid was taken to the ultra-abusive Estelle High Security Unit located in Huntsville, Texas. Rashid was attacked three separate times while handcuffed and told by prison employees that he would either be broken or killed. While housed at Estelle Rashid began to report on the long-established culture of abuse, racism, and terrorism practiced by TDCJ employees at Estelle. Only a year earlier I too had witnessed and was victimized by TDCJ employees at Estelle who would create circumstances in which to abuse human beings. TDCJ prison officials would conspire with each other and boldly lie to the media claiming we were just a bunch of disgruntled Black Nationalist Extremists. This was the label placed on us in order to sabotage our effectiveness. This is a tactic frequently used against activists who many times assume the role of investigative journalist or whistleblower, mainly because of their close proximity to the abuse.

Neither Rashid nor I succumbed to the ploys of TDCJ prison officials to silence

our voice of protest. Rashid was transferred to the Bill Clements Unit in Amarillo, Texas which is commonly known as the Klan-handle of Texas. Rashid suffered a bout of acute hypertension and prison employees at Bill Clements used this as an opportunity to attempt to kill Rashid by refusing him adequate medical care! This is how serious Texas prison officials are about silencing the voice of any prisoner who sheds light on the true nature of their methods and practices of abuse and premeditated murder! And yes I did say murder!

I do not want to digress to the point of losing focus on the purpose of this essay. You see even though Rashid and I reported aggressively on the abuse happening on Estelle, no authoritative entity would step in to investigate or stop the abuse, but recently something changed. On January 27, a prisoner rights organization located in Austin, Texas finally shed a discerning light on some of the abuse at Estelle.

The Prison Justice League released a 20 page report entitled: Cruel and Usual Punishment - Excessive Use of Force at the Estelle Unit. For a digital download of the report, visit: <http://www.prisonjusticeleague.org>. The report actually isn't focused on the Estelle High Security Unit. The Prison Justice League didn't have much access to prisoners housed there. The report describes violent physical assaults by staff against blind, deaf, and elderly prisoners housed at Estelle.

Rashid and I both were transferred away from Estelle but one New Afrikan Black Panther was left behind to face the racist

and sadistic TDCJ employees who beat and target the most vulnerable prisoners. Comrade Oliver Eshman Lister AKA Ben Ammi spent approximately 2-1/2 years organizing prisoners housed at Estelle in order to stop the abuse. Comrade Ben Ammi wrote grievances, the media, countless letters to state legislators, and prisoner rights organizations, in an attempt to garner support. For months and months no help or support came.

Secret Societies and Racist Gangs

What did come, was a collusive and concerted effort from a secret fraternity of ultra-racist TDCJ officers. There are many white male TDCJ employees at the Estelle Unit who are members of a local Masonic Temple in Huntsville Texas. These men have close fraternal ties with a white supremacist gang known as the White Knights. These racist TDCJ employees targeted Comrade Ben Ammi for months and attempted to make his life a living hell. Comrade Ben Ammi was baited into physical and verbal confrontations, and he was given bogus and fabricated disciplinary reports. He was housed with known white supremacist prisoners and when Comrade Ben Ammi broke his hand while defending himself against these racists, he was withheld from obtaining adequate treatment, not for days, but for months! Permanently damaging his hand for life!

And this, my respected brothers and sisters, is how business is done on many TDCJ units located in rural sections of Texas! This is a closely guarded secret among the upper echelon of TDCJ prison administrators, who hold dual membership as "honorable" members of the local Scottish Rite Lodge is a covert allegiance to groups like the White Knights, Aryan Circle, and even the infamous Aryan Brotherhood of Texas. This is the secret war being waged against our esteemed Minister of Defense Kevin 'Rashid' Johnson.

I can tell all of you from personal experience not all Masonic organizations condone and sanction the abuse of the elderly or disabled human beings whether they are free citizens or wards of the state. My days as a Free-Mason ended when I became a convicted felon. Like Comrade Ben Ammi and Comrade Rashid, I am now a servant of all the people.

Transformational Change!

Anyone who is engaged in serious social justice work will tell you that repression

and abuse come with the territory when you assume an adversarial stance against the agents of oppression. In September 2014 I met a remarkable prisoner named Nannon M. Williams. Nannon served 10 years on Texas' Death Row. I was referred to Nannon by another remarkable former Texas death row prisoner, Thomas Miller-El. While housed on death row Nannon witnessed the execution of 300 human beings he had come to know. Nannon is a human rights activist, he has written five books and in May 2014 Nannon teamed up with Dr. Betty Gilmore to release: *The Darkest Hour: Shedding Light on the Impact of Isolation and Death Row in Texas Prisons*. The book is phenomenal! I not only read it, I studied it.

On pages 208 and 209 I came across some incredible information concerning transformational change and some of the tactics the state of Texas uses to hinder change. I will quote a passage verbatim with the hope you will grasp this golden nugget of knowledge:

"We also need to examine the reason why Texas has been so resistant to change despite the known consequences to these inhumane and degrading extreme forms of punishment. In his book *Conflict Revolution: Mediating Evil, War, Injustice and Terrorism*, Kenneth Cloke identifies ways by which systems resist change. He says, 'Systems may benefit, for example, by encouraging adversarial communications and chronically conflicted relationships, isolating critics and dissenters and punishing transformational change efforts. These forms of systemic resistance may fuel hostility and magnify conflicts over change, if they also divert attention from transformational change.'"

Hear lies the motivation behind numerous attacks on political and politicized prisoners across Amerika. For decades, Mumia Abu-Jamal has been an ambassador of change. Mumia's voice has motivated an entire generation of human rights and civil rights activists. Right at the pinnacle of brutal executions of people of color by police in Amerika all of a sudden Gov. Tom Corbett signs Senate Bill 508 into law! This bill was written to silence Mumia Abu-Jamal! This bill was orchestrated by the Fraternal Order of Police which doesn't want to stop murdering young Black and Brown people on Amerika's streets. The last thing the cops want is transformational change, and if the system can't silence us, they will murder us!

Look at the case of our beloved fallen comrade and brother Phil Africa! Agents of the state of Pennsylvania conspired to murder Phil Africa - period! Thirty years ago the US government along with local police agencies in Philadelphia bombed the MOVE house on Osage Avenue. Phil Africa was a beautiful brother who was a committed revolutionary who believed in transformational change. I urge all serious human rights activists to contact Ramona Africa at: onomoveLLJA@gmail.com and ask her how you can help as the 30th anniversary of the bombing of MOVE approaches on May 13, 2015!

And what about the recent ploy by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to block newspapers such as the *San Francisco Bay View* or *Turning The Tide* from being received by prisoners held at Pelican Bay? You hear right-wing fanatics screaming about free speech but I never hear pundits such as Bill O'Reilly or Sean Hannity championing the constitutional rights of those Black, Brown or poor white men and women trapped in America's prisons! Never!

It Is A Class Struggle, Dammit!

I wrote this piece on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X at the Audubon Ballroom. It is very interesting how comrades like Malcolm, MLK, and Fred Hampton weren't exactly marked for death until they started preaching unity of the downtrodden working-class. Unity which transcended race, religion, or national origin. The enemy being the capitalist ruling class, and it was the capitalist ruling class which orchestrated the activities of COINTELPRO. And it is the capitalist ruling class which has sanctioned and condoned the murder of prisoners in Texas who toil in factory slave shops for the State of Texas. Journalists in Texas have been bribed and threatened to keep them silent. Thank goodness there are media groups such as Roots Action who will expose the inhumane activities in Texas. Ask yourself: "Am I an oppressor or am I oppressed?" These are the only two types of people in the world. Labor aristocracy, proletariat, lumpen, and Petit Bourgeoisie are groupings present today in America, but at the end of the day, you are either oppressed or the one doing the oppressing - which are you?

Our struggle is a protracted international

Serving The People .Continued on page 7

THE LAW OF PRISON SLAVERY

Both A Political Struggle And A Judicial One?

By Ed Mead

In the early 1990s Prisoners in various Minnesota correctional facilities filed a class action suit in an effort to secure minimum wages for the work they performed in the many prison industries. The industries in question produce items such as furniture, truck and auto body products, mattresses, textiles, and notebooks; they also provide services such as data entry, assembly, market research, and printing to private companies with whom the state has contracts. The plaintiff prisoners also alleged that prison officials sell prison industry products in interstate commerce to governmental entities and to the private sector. The plaintiffs alleged that in 1991, total sales for prison industries exceeded \$11 million, and forty percent of the sales were in the private sector.

The prisoners were being paid between fifty and seventy-five cents per hour, and they may earn good time credits on those days they work. The substance of their complaint consisted of an alleged violation of their statutory and constitutional rights by the state's failure to pay them minimum or prevailing wages for the work performed in prison industries, and by punishing prisoners who refuse to work in industries by depriving them of good time credits.

This case, like so many others filed on the prison employment issue, boils down to the thirteenth amendment's¹ sanctioning of slavery for this segment of society. Regarding prisoners, the district judge said, "they are in fact engaged in involuntary servitude, not employment." "The law is clear," the court continued, "that prisoners may be required to work and that any compensation for their labor exists by the grace of the state." The bottom line, it was held, is that "the Thirteenth Amendment's exclusion of prisoner labor from the prohibition on involuntary servitude is a[n] economic reality"

The prisoner-plaintiffs argued that Title 18 U.S.C. § 1761, the Ashurst-Sumners Act, provides that: "[w]hoever knowingly transports in interstate commerce any goods, wares, or merchandise manufactured, produced, or mined, wholly

or in part by convicts or prisoners shall be fined or imprisoned or both." Even though it was alleged that prisoners working in prison industries produced products sold in interstate commerce, the court ruled that prisoners could not enforce the provisions of the law.

The prisoners raised the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), 29 U.S.C. §§ 201-219, which requires employers to pay their employees a minimum hourly wage. The Act defines "employer" as "any person acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee," and defines "employee" as "any individual employed by an employer." Courts were ordered to construe these terms expansively in order to further the congressional goal of outlawing from interstate commerce goods produced in violation of the Act.

Where the employee/employer status is uncertain, the law requires that the economic realities of the relationship, and not technical concepts of employment, are to control. The court in the instant case ruled that "[w]here inmates work in the prison pursuant to penological work assignments, the economic reality is that they are not employees." The district judge then launched off into some technical concepts (ignoring the economic realities) to justify his ruling that the FLSA does not apply to prison industrial workers.

The court of course grant the state's motion to dismiss.²

The ultimate solution must be a political one because the judicial system cannot rule that a portion of the constitution is unconstitutional. The government will, however, recognize political strength. Strength is gained through a nation-wide organization of rights and class conscious prisoners and their supporters. And this organization must, at the very least, be prepared to wage an ongoing fight for the abolishment of the thirteenth amendment to the U.S. constitution. As long as that amendment exists, prison slavery will continue to be a reality. And from that reality will flow additional generations of needlessly destroyed or damaged individuals. It is not in the interests of any society to maintain such a failing and destructive approach to crime and

punishment.

As you can see, there is little to be gained by continuing to knock on the judicial door in an effort to secure relief in this area. Even if one were to educate the courts on the futility of expecting some good to come from maintaining a segment of society in a perpetual state of irresponsibility, dependency, and slavery, their hands are tied by the constitution.

I can see only one possible avenue for judicial relief in this area. The U.S. constitution, Article Six, Clause 2, states in full: "This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and *all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding.*" (Emphasis mine)

The International Declaration of Human Rights, a treaty the U.S. is a signatory to, states that we, as human beings, have the right to peacefully organize ourselves. Article 4 of said declaration states in part "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude..." Article 5 says "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Article 19 states "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." And lastly, and getting to our point, Item 4 of Article 23 guarantees that "[e]veryone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests."

These basic rights should be enforceable as the International Declaration of Human Rights is a treaty and the U.S. is a signatory to that treaty. And while judges cannot overturn the thirteenth amendment, they must honor the supreme law of the land which, as we've noted, proclaims "judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding."

For the rights conscious prisoner, here's your shot. For the class conscious prisoner, it is long term political organizing on the inside. ●

1. Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as a punishment for crime ...* shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

2. See: *McMaster v. State of Minnesota*, 819 F.Supp. 1492 (D. Minn. 1993)

\$7M VERDICT AGAINST COPS UPHELD IN DNA EXONERATION

Two former Miramar police officers who framed a mentally challenged 15-year-old boy for the rape and murder of a woman must pay him \$7 million for the nearly 26 years he spent in prison, a federal appeals court ruled Thursday.

Anthony Caravella, now 46, of Pembroke Pines, was freed from prison in September 2009 after DNA testing exonerated him of the rape and murder of Ada Cox Jankowski, 58. His conviction was re-examined after a series of Sun Sentinel stories on the 1983 case.

Caravella, who works doing clean-up at his uncle's construction sites, said he was happy and relieved — though he could still face a long, difficult path to try to collect the money.

The same DNA tests that exonerated Caravella linked another man to the vicious crime — Anthony Martinez, the victim's neighbor and the last person seen alive with her. Martinez and Jankowski left a bar together shortly before she was raped, stabbed more than two dozen times, strangled and left on the grounds of Miramar Elementary School.

Martinez, who was 17, was the detectives' prime suspect, but they dropped him when he stopped cooperating. Martinez died of natural causes in upstate New York in November 2010, two months after the Broward State Attorney's Office and Miramar police named him a "person of interest" in the murder. •

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/crime/fl-anthony-caravella-dna-7-million-20150122-story.html>

RAPPER FACES LIFE IN PRISON

The San Diego-based rapper, whose real name is Brandon Duncan, faces 25 years to life in prison if he is convicted under a little-known California statute.

Duncan faces nine counts of criminal street gang conspiracy. Prosecutors say that even though they know he never committed any crime himself, he "increased his stature and respect" after a rash of shootings in the

city in 2013. They aren't blaming his lyrics for the shootings, they are saying he made CD sales due to the fact that gang violence was up. That, in and of itself — prosecutors claim — is a crime.

CNN Legal Analyst Mark Geragos says that there is no question that this is all about the district attorney trying to send the message "that you shouldn't glorify or glamorize gang activity." •

<http://countercurrentnews.com/2015/01/media-tunes-in-to-rap-artist-with-who-faces-life-in-prison-for-album/>

THE BALANCE OF TERROR



Walter Edmund Bond #37096-013

By Support Crew

Ever since I arrived in this counterterrorism prison unit known as the CMU (Communications Management Unit) in January of 2012 I have heard a couple of things that I don't feel are accurately portrayed to the outside world.

When these units were originally opened they housed an overwhelming amount of Arab Muslims (and still do) to balance out the equation and not appear racist or biased it is believed that many non-Muslim, non-Arab people were brought to the CMU's specifically to "balance" and give diversity to these prison units. However true this may have been several years ago. This is not the reality of the CMU's today.

The reality is that Animal Rights activists (and others deemed to have threatening or subversive beliefs) such as myself that have been branded terrorists by the federal governments "Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act" (AETA for short) are actually viewed as "domestic terrorists", "violent

extremists" and "fanatical activists" by the system. It's not a joke, a ruse, or a tactic to demonize the movement. It is actually how the US government views groups such as the Animal Liberation Front. We are not kept on these units merely to fill a quota in a government office. I cringe every time I see mention of the CMU's in the media and then hear of the "balancers" that are also placed here, even though some of these 'balancers' have been here over 7 years now!

The truth is that when it comes to the AETA and the CMU if you are convicted of it, or housed in it (whichever the case may be) you are deemed, considered and treated as a domestic terrorist threat. Not as a paper dragon or an extremist in the governments new anti-terrorist affirmative action program. I live here and could very possibly spend my entire prison sentence, a decade straight, in this prison within a prison. Where I have my every breath and movement monitored and analyzed scrupulously. I don't say this to frighten or sound severe, but I don't want those in the forefront of speaking out against these secret prison units or against the AETA to make light of it as if it's all a government charade. Nor should they think that accounts of what it was like in the CMU years ago explain accurately what it is like today.

And the fact is I am not a terrorist. I think that people, anyone, that murders, maims or kills innocent bystanders to make a point, protest, or create fear and panic in the populace is wrong. I think terrorism is sick and evil and I have never, would never, and will never, agree with it. No matter what the US government labels me as, or any other freedom fighters for social justice!

We live in a world that is currently teeming with human indignity, or rather the indignity of humans. I don't have all the answers. Honestly, on most days I don't have any answers. But I know as time progresses and world events unfold that there are a lot of problems I don't want to be a part of. War, corporate greed, imperialism, racism, police brutality, religious intolerance, Animal abuse, Earth's exploitation and devastation are all problems that holding signs and signing petitions are not going to change. But brutality, violence, intolerance and the specter of terrorism are not only the wrong way to address the ills of the world but are, in fact, simply new forms of the same sickness of the soul that has plagued mankind since the beginning. •

Abdul Haqq, ALF POW

OLIGARCHS RIGHT TO FEAR THE WORLD THEY'VE MADE

Escalating inequality: work of a global elite that resists every challenge to its vested interests

By Seumas Milne

The billionaires and corporate oligarchs meeting in Davos this week are getting worried about inequality. It might be hard to stomach that the overlords of a system that has delivered the widest global economic gulf in human history should be handwringing about the consequences of their own actions.

But even the architects of the crisis-ridden international economic order are starting to see the dangers. It's not just the maverick hedge-funder George Soros, who likes to describe himself as a class traitor. Paul Polman, Unilever chief executive, frets about the "capitalist threat to capitalism". Christine Lagarde, the IMF managing director, fears capitalism might indeed carry Marx's "seeds of its own destruction" and warns that something needs to be done.

The scale of the crisis has been laid out for them by the charity Oxfam. Just 80 individuals now have the same net wealth as 3.5 billion people – half the entire global population. Last year, the best-off 1% owned 48% of the world's wealth, up from 44% five years ago. On current trends, the richest 1% will have pocketed more than the other 99% put together next year. The 0.1% have been doing even better, quadrupling their share of US income since the 1980s.

This is a wealth grab on a grotesque scale. For 30 years, under the rule of what Mark Carney, the Bank of England governor, calls "market fundamentalism", inequality in income and wealth has ballooned, both between and within the large majority of countries. In Africa, the absolute number living on less than \$2 a day has doubled since 1981 as the roll call of billionaires has swelled.

In most of the world, labor's share of national income has fallen continuously and wages have stagnated under this regime of privatization, deregulation and low taxes on the rich. At the same time finance has sucked wealth from the public realm into the hands of a small minority, even as it has laid waste the rest of the economy. Now the evidence has piled up that not only is such appropriation of wealth a moral and social outrage, but it is fuelling social and climate conflict, wars, mass migration and political corruption, stunting health and life chances, increasing poverty, and widening

gender and ethnic divides.

Escalating inequality has also been a crucial factor in the economic crisis of the past seven years, squeezing demand and fuelling the credit boom. We don't just know that from the research of the French economist Thomas Piketty or the British authors of the social study *The Spirit Level*. After years of promoting Washington orthodoxy, even the western-dominated OECD and IMF argue that the widening income and wealth gap has been key to the slow growth of the past two neoliberal decades. The British economy would have been almost 10% larger if inequality hadn't mushroomed. Now the richest are using austerity to help themselves to an even larger share of the cake.

The big exception to the tide of inequality in recent years has been Latin America. Progressive governments across the region turned their back on a disastrous economic model, took back resources from corporate control and slashed inequality. The numbers living on less than \$2 a day have fallen from 108 million to 53 million in little over a decade. China, which also rejected much of the neoliberal catechism, has seen sharply rising inequality at home but also lifted more people out of poverty than the rest of the world combined, offsetting the growing global income gap.

Just 80 individuals now have the same net wealth as 3.5 billion people – half the entire global population.

These two cases underline that increasing inequality and poverty are very far from inevitable. They're the result of political and economic decisions. The thinking person's Davos oligarch realizes that allowing things to carry on as they are is dangerous. So some want a more "inclusive capitalism" – including more progressive taxes – to save the system from itself.

But it certainly won't come about as a result of Swiss mountain musings or anxious Guildhall lunches. Whatever the feelings of some corporate barons, vested corporate and elite interests – including the organizations they run and the political structures they have colonized – have shown they will

fight even modest reforms tooth and nail. To get the idea, you only have to listen to the squeals of protest, including from some in his own party, at Ed Miliband's plans to tax homes worth over £2m to fund the health service, or the demand from the one-time reformist Fabian Society that the Labor leader be more pro-business (for which read pro-corporate), or the wall of congressional resistance to Barack Obama's mild redistributive taxation proposals.

Perhaps a section of the worried elite might be prepared to pay a bit more tax. What they won't accept is any change in the balance of social power – which is why, in one country after another, they resist any attempt to strengthen trade unions, even though weaker unions have been a crucial factor in the rise of inequality in the industrialized world.

It's only through a challenge to the entrenched interests that have dined off a dysfunctional economic order that the tide of inequality will be reversed. The anti-austerity Syriza party, favorite to win the Greek elections this weekend, is attempting to do just that – as the Latin American left has succeeded in doing over the past decade and a half. Even to get to that point demands stronger social and political movements to break down or bypass the blockage in a colonized political mainstream. Crocodile tears about inequality are a symptom of a fearful elite. But change will only come from unrelenting social pressure and political challenge. •

The Guardian



Art by Mark Makinson

BEYOND REFORM: ESSAYS CALL FOR A SWEEPING REASSESSMENT OF INCARCERATION

Edited by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Johanna Fernandez, *Socialism and Democracy*, Vol. 28, No. 3, November 2014

By David Gilbert

Prison populations have exploded in the United States, with a nearly eight-fold increase in the number of people behind bars from 1970 to today. In the initial decades of that breathtaking ascent, Black radical organizations, along with other groups spearheading systemic change, were devastated by, among other things, government counter-intelligence operations.

One result is that today there are dozens of political prisoners incarcerated for their stands against repression. Some are Prisoners of War (POWs) from the just liberation struggles of Black, Native American, Puerto Rican and Mexican people. Some of these prisoners have been held for more than 40 years. The cancerous growth of mass incarceration and the lethal repression of revolutionary groups are neither accidental nor unrelated.

The scandal of mass incarceration in the United States is finally getting some public attention, with a few damning statistics frequently cited: The United States, with 5 percent of the world's population, holds 25 percent of the world's prisoners; and while African Americans constitute 15 percent of illicit drug users, they are 75 percent of those in prison for drugs. While this new exposure is welcome, the mainstream discussion fails to get at the roots of the problem and therefore can't begin to address the depth of the changes needed.

In the November, 2014, special issue of *Socialism and Democracy*, "The Roots of Mass Incarceration in the US: Locking Up Black Dissidents and Punishing the Poor," provides a penetrating analysis of a range of the issues involved and points toward the steps that are needed to turn around these horrors. Not surprisingly, the most trenchant essays in this collection come from those who have been in the trenches - those who have been fighting this monster for decades, especially the several pieces written by political prisoners and ex-political prisoners. This publication couldn't be more timely and relevant, as the mighty river of the Black Lives Matter movement flows across and brings new life into the country.

"The Roots of Mass Incarceration in the US" was edited by scholar/activist Johanna Fernandez and Mumia Abu-Jamal, the political prisoner who has been held in Pennsylvania since 1981 (and is a stellar journalist and superb writer). Their introduction is a brilliant essay: Right in the first paragraph, they hit the nail on the head, writing that in the wake of the advances of the 1960s, the US launched "the frenzied reaction to the black freedom struggle that set the stage for today's hyper-incarceration of poor urban black and brown communities." They go on to elaborate on a number of key, but rarely highlighted, issues - including the deleterious impact on the children and communities of those ripped away to jail, and the ways in which the system dehumanizes people at home while similarly invading, torturing and killing abroad.

Fittingly, the first piece in the issue is an interview with Angela Y. Davis ("Deepening the Debate Over Mass Incarceration: An Interview"). Davis has been an outstanding voice - both as author and as activist - around both mass incarceration and political prisoners since her own time in jail in 1970. As always, she's completely clear about how these travesties are grounded in the foundation of white supremacy and capitalism. Also, in welcome contrast to many commentators, she underscores the impact on women. Even though they make up only a small portion of the incarcerated, the number of women in prison has been increasing at a much faster rate than that of men, with over 200,000 women behind bars today. Davis links that rise to the shredding of the social safety net, while she also critiques the virulent attacks on black women's roles in keeping their families together.

The racist character of the "justice" system is stunning. The rate of incarceration for black males is nearly eight times that for white males; and for women, the ratio is almost 3 to 1. Black men are incarcerated at a higher rate in the United States today than they were under apartheid in South Africa. Sociologist Loic Wacquant ("Class, Race, and Hyperincarceration in Revanchist America") also reminds us not to forget class: He shows that the poor/rich ratio within each racial group is even steeper than the ratios between races.

While class is always an important basis

for how policies are applied, the dynamics leading to mass incarceration flow from an epic political battle. Kevin "Rashid" Johnson is a courageous fighter for prisoners' rights who's been in prison for over 20 years. He's also a keen analyst of society and clearly states what set off the cancerous growth of prisons along with the lethal political repression. In "Racialized Mass Imprisonment: Counterinsurgency and Genocide," he writes:

The US mass imprisonment model developed as yet another disguised system of racialized social control and counterinsurgency in specific response to the New Afrikan/Black Liberation movement [which] catalyzed the various rebellious social movements of that day (including the Women's, anti-Vietnam War, Native / American, Gay-Lesbian, etc. movements).

Johnson also exposes how the system manipulates poor and working-class whites by deflecting what should be anger against capitalism to various racially coded scapegoats, including welfare recipients, immigrants and those accused of street crime.

From inside prison walls, I regularly observe the sad irony that many white prisoners are heavily invested in white supremacy as a way for those prisoners, disdained by society, to feel that they are "better" than other people.

Despite their lower rate of incarceration, the mushrooming of the total population has meant that a much greater number of whites are locked up today than in the 1970s. Those invested in their racism fail to see how the advances for prisoners' rights came only in the context of the Civil Rights and the Black Power movements.

A core analysis of mass incarceration is powerfully presented in two essays in the middle of this volume (both by friends of mine). The first of these is by dedicated organizer dequi kioni-sadiki and Sekou Odinga, a political prisoner/POW who was still inside when this essay was written and was recently released after doing 33 years. In "'We Reserve the Right to Resist': Prison Wars and Black Resistance," they provide a sweeping sense of the history of mass incarceration, tracing it back to the resistance to slavery and the repression to enforce it. The attacks on the modern Black

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struggle against imperialism. We will not allow the state to deter us from our mission. We draw knowledge, wisdom, and understanding from those who struggled before us. Even Mikhail Bakunin has something relevant to offer for those with ears to hear. Listen to the relevance of Bakunin's argument in this excerpt from a letter he wrote to the editorial board of *La Liberte* in October 1872:

"There is only one law binding all the members... Sections and federations of the International... It is the international solidarity of workers in all jobs in all countries in their economic struggle against the exploiters of labor. It is the real organization of that solidarity through the spontaneous action of the working classes, and the absolutely free Federation... Which constitutes the real, living unity of the International. Who can doubt that it is out of this increasingly widespread organization of the militant solidarity of the proletariat against bourgeois exploitation that the political struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie must rise and grow?" - Mikhail Bakunin

Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due!

Comrade Rashid has said: "Revolution is a birthing process, the new society forming in the womb of the old one. Through struggle we create more favorable conditions for greater struggle. Nothing comes instantly. Changing social and economic relations must proceed and develop from a lower to a higher level."

The New Afrikan Black Panther Party (Prison Chapter) would like to thank the director of the Prison Justice League Erica Gammill and her colleague Kate Spear for their work on the Estelle report, which shed much needed light on the abuse of prisoners. We would like to thank PJJ special counsel Attorney Brian McGiverin for lending his legal expertise to PJJ. The state of Texas desperately needs independent oversight over their prison system. However it will take a national outcry to get the attention of Texas state legislators, who don't think there is a problem with the status quo. Not my son or daughter up in there - who cares? I do!

You see, brothers and sisters, there is a media propaganda war being waged against those who expose injustice in Texas. The media in Texas basically have bought the narrative given to them by professional li-

ars such as Jason Clark, the spokesperson for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. I encourage you all to join our online campaign #PleaseStoptheKilling. I must personally think Prof. Victor Wallis of Berklee College in Boston Mass, and Prof. Justin Adkins of Williams College in Williamstown Mass for their work in promoting our #PleaseStoptheKilling campaign. Truthfully nobody would have ever heard our cries for justice if it wasn't for Sis. Mary Ratcliff, the editor of the *San Francisco Bay View* or Carole Seligman and Bonnie Weinstein of *Socialist Viewpoint*. However special thanks must be extended to comrades Noelle Hanrahan of Prison Radio, Michael Novick of *Turning The Tide*, Comrade Twitch of Central Texas ABC, and Alina Dollat in France! Thank you.

Dare to struggle, Dare to win! All Power to the People!

SOURCE LIST

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FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

Every generation for the past 200 years can vividly picture the Frankenstein monster.

Tall imposing, usually mute, this creature is alive and not alive; mobile, but haltingly so, that we, the more nimble can escape his perilous embrace.

Yet, who is the real monster; the one who designed and constructed this being? – or the one who was built?

One wonders of such things when we see the sudden slaughters, bombings and beheadings – happening in many parts of the cities of Europe and the Middle East – and beyond.

We hear of ISIS – and of Nigeria's 'Boko Haram'.

But guess where it all began?

In the 1970s – 1979, in fact – an Afghan warlord, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, was hired by Pakistani intelligence as a gift to the U.S. CIA. Hekmatyar was a ruthless dude, who hated both the U.S. and the Soviets.

His Pakistani backers told him his job was to kill Russians – Communists actually – who want to back Najibullah, the Afghan president. While the CIA was quietly calling the guy a "fascist: and "scary", then President Ronald Reagan called them "freedom fighters", and invited them to the White House.

Hekmatyar, then head of something he called the Islamic Party, built a military machine he called Mujahiddin.

This would be the seed of the Taliban, al Qaeda, now ISIS, and hundreds more across the world: trained, armed and aimed at Western targets and now –aimed at the West itself.

Mary Shelly Wollstonecraft, the author of the 1818 science fiction novel, Frankenstein, had the scientist say the following words: "I beheld the wretch – the miserable monster whom I had created."

Who was the real monster – the maker – or the made? •



THE VIETNAM WAR: FIFTY YEARS LATER

"Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

-George Santayana

By Ed Mead

It was some fifty years ago that the American war against Vietnam was being waged, yet how many remember or have retained anything other than the government's version of things regarding that conflict (as it was called in those days, as the Constitution requires a declaration of war by Congress for it to be an actual war).

Professor Christian Appy teaches history at the University of Massachusetts, he is the author of three books about the Vietnam War. A recent article of his corrected me on a statistical error I'd made in these pages. I had always used the number three point two million Vietnamese citizens killed by the American military in Vietnam, this was the figure used by former U.S. Defense Secretary Mr. Robert McNamra.

Professor Appy pointed out that in fact "more than four million Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians" were murdered by the United States in that war. What was the attitude of the American people about that war? Appy goes on to note, "In 1971 a remarkable 58% of the public told pollsters that they thought the conflict was 'immoral,' a word that most Americans had never applied to their country's wars."

Professor Appy goes on:

"Vietnam veterans had ... been horribly ill-treated. Their chief abuser ... was their own government, which first lied to them about the causes and nature of the war, then sent them off to fight for an unpopular, dictatorial regime in a land where they were widely regarded as foreign invaders. Finally, on their return, it failed to provide them with either adequate support or benefits.

"And corporate America was also to blame. Employers were reluctant to hire or train them, in many cases scared off by crude 1970s media stereotypes about wacko, drug-addled, and violent vets. Nor did traditional veterans' organizations like the American Legion or the Veterans of Foreign Wars provide a warm welcome to those coming home

from a deeply contested and unpopular war filled with disillusioned soldiers."

Younger readers might be wondering how the American war against Vietnam started. Well, for many decades the U.S. government proclaimed itself the global defender of democracy, where in actuality it has consistently fought against democracy in places like Central and South America, Africa, Asia, etc.

The short version is that the Vietnamese people had successfully kicked out the Japanese imperialists from their nation. Then the French came in and occupied them and they too were forcibly ejected. In 1956, in what was then called the global community, there was an agreement reached in Geneva that mandated reunification elections be held in Vietnam to decide the nation's fate.

The United States then conducted a poll of the Vietnamese people and concluded that communist Ho Chi Minh would be the overwhelming winner. Before the elections could be held the U.S. invaded Vietnam. The logic was that if Vietnam fell the rest of Indochina would "fall like dominoes" into communist hands.

Just like the Japanese and French imperialists before us, the foreign invaders from the U.S. were also forcibly driven from Vietnam. Of course no dominos fell (just as there were no WMDs in Iraq). One last note, in Geneva the U.S. formally agreed (read promised) to pay Vietnam billions in war reparations. The Vietnamese never got a cent. Does the American Government lie? You don't have to travel to Vietnam to get an answer to that question. Just ask a Native American. ●



The My Lai massacre in which American ground troops killed, at close range, more than 500 unarmed, unresisting, South Vietnamese civilians -- most of them women, children, and old men -- over a four-hour stretch on March 16, 1968.

Quote Box

"The press is so powerful in its image-making role, it can make a criminal look like he's the victim and make the victim look like he's the criminal. This is the press, an irresponsible press. If you aren't careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed and loving the people who are doing the oppressing."

- Malcolm X, Audubon Ballroom, December 13, 1964

"The ruling class has the schools and press under its thumb. This enables it to sway the emotions of the masses."

- Albert Einstein - (1879-1955)
Physicist and Professor, Nobel Prize

"When buying and selling are controlled by legislation, the first things to be bought and sold are legislators."

- P. J. O'Rourke - (1947-) humorist, journalist, & political commentator

"The abuse of buying and selling votes crept in and money began to play an important part in determining elections. Later on, this process of corruption spread to the law courts. And then to the army, and finally the Republic was subjected to the rule of emperors."

- Plutarch (46 A.D.-127 A.D.)
Historian of the Roman Republic

"Money becomes evil not when it is used to buy goods but when it is used to buy power... economic inequalities become evil when they are translated into political inequalities."

- Samuel Huntington,
Political Scientist

Democracy is the antithesis of capitalism! But capitalism is the product the U.S. government, the Pentagon, and the commercial media are marketing to us as democracy.

- Charles Sullivan, Author

"When a man is denied the right to live the life he believes in, he has no choice but to become an outlaw."

- Nelson Mandela

Violence - The Oppressor and the Oppressed

Over the years you have listened to me prattle on and on about the necessity for peaceful protest on the inside, that violence in the prison struggle only serves the interests of the state, and that those advocating violence are provocateurs who will give the Green Wall exactly what they need to put an end to all forms of resistance to prison slavery. I'm not a pacifist, but I am somewhat of an amateur strategist (or maybe age has allowed me to develop some common sense). Prisoners and ex-prisoners must not use violence in the furtherance of the struggle. Period. If you feel you must implement some form of protest beyond the confines of bourgeois law, then take those impulses to another struggle, not the prisoners' movement.

The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children. The U.S. ranks first in GDP and the number of world's billionaires, and second worst in child poverty rates—just behind Romania.

As long as the capitalist state exists there will be violence between the oppressors and the oppressed. Often, as demonstrated in the rash of recent police killings of unarmed poor people who did not even rise to the level of "suspect" in a crime. The person killed can be a 12 year old child with a toy gun. This is police terror. One of the dictionary definitions of the word "terror" is to rule through the use of fear.

We have a Black man sitting in Seattle's jail charged with stalking and shooting two police officers while they sat in their patrol car, one cop was killed the other wounded. He too was responding to the police killings of Seattle's youth.

This morning I picked up the *Seattle Times* newspaper and on the front page was an article titled "2 NYC Police Officers Shot Dead in Patrol Car" with a subtitle of "Gunman vowed online to retaliate for chokehold death of Eric Garner." Just as the Seattle suspect was responding to police terror, so too was today's case in NYC. As George Jackson wrote "If terror is going to be the choice of weapons, there must be funerals on both sides" [*Blood in My Eye*, p. 26]. Those jailed for killing law enforcement officers said their acts were in

ED'S COMMENTS

response to police terror. Prisoners do not have that luxury in that the use of violence on the inside is a tactical and strategic error that will set the movement back another 40 years (after the killing of Fey Stender) and prisoners spiraling to ever deeper levels of prisoner-on-prisoner violence.

Police terror is a national problem in America's poor and minority communities. One might understandably respond to such provocations in a violent way. But prisoners cannot stoop to engage in revenge. The prisoners' struggle must be peacefully waged, both inside and out. Today, to one extent or another, that movement exists on the inside of California's prisons. Remember, without mass struggle there can be no revolution. Our job is to build that mass movement on the inside, without provoking additional repression in the process. I can envision a world in which every GP tier has an elected representative, one accountable to those who elected him or her, not to the prison administration, and dormitory and other open housing units would similarly elect prisoner representatives.

Police, Courts, and Prisons: The State's Apparatus of Repression

Author Dave Lindorff writes: "I'm disgusted that according to the Prison Policy Initiative, the US has at any given moment some 2.4 million people locked up (only two-thirds of whom have even been convicted of a crime, with most of the rest awaiting trial because they can't post the excessive bail set by our corrupt court system). And no wonder: Just between the late '80s and 2008, the number of federal laws for which someone can end up being jailed has soared from 3000 to 4450, and it keeps rising as charlatans in Congress keep passing laws to create ever more "crimes" to punish. And that doesn't count state and local governments, which explains why the US, with 5% of the world's population, accounts for 25% of the world's prison inmates. ... We live in a punishment-obsessed society, overseen by cops who seem to derive pleasure in lording it over the public."

While recent killings by police in Ferguson, Missouri, and New York City receive national attention, the fact is that from 1999 through 2011, American law enforcement officers killed 4,531 people, 96 percent by firearms and 96 percent of them men, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. African Americans, 13

percent of the population, are victims in 26 percent of police shootings. Law enforcement kills African Americans at 2.8 times the rate of white non-Latinos, and 4.3 times the rate of Asians.

Hundreds of police killings have been left out of a nationwide database that keeps tabs on these acts, according to an investigative report published by the *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*). The newspaper collected information from more than 100 police agencies across the country [out of tens of thousands] all among the largest departments in the US. According to the report, more than 550 killings by police had not been included in the national data kept by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). In its report, *WSJ* took data from the FBI and compared it with information provided to the media outlet by 105 police agencies. The paper tallied 1,800 deaths at the hands of police between 2007 and 2012, which is 45 percent more than the number of "justifiable homicides" recorded by the FBI in the same time period.

Putting It In Perspective

Fyodor Dostoevsky, Russian novelist (1821 - 1881), wrote that "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons" Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children." The United States ranks first in Gross Domestic Product and first in the number of billionaires, and second worst in child poverty rates - ahead only of Romania. Today, March 10th, the United States was singled out by a United Nations expert on torture for being the only country in the world that continues to sentence children to life in prison without parole.

How do we treat women in the areas our military occupies, how have women fared under our occupation of Iraq, for example? Under Saddam Iraqi women benefited from state subsidized childcare and education; they once formed about half the public sector workforce and 50 percent of the country's doctors. Today the women of Iraq are forced to stay inside or wear full burkas when out. How do our friends in the region handle women's issues? Our best ally in the area (other than Israel) is Saudi Arabia. A Saudi woman who had fallen victim to a violent gang-rape has just been sentenced to 200 lashes and six months in jail after being found guilty of speaking to the media about the crime. Yeah, women are not even allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia. ●

Beyond Reform.... Continued from page 6

Liberation movement are best exemplified by (but not limited to) the government's illegal COINTELPRO (counter intelligence program) of disruption, imprisonment and assassination. That went hand-in-hand with mass incarceration to control and contain the ghettos.

Kioni-sadiki and Odinga give a sense of the range of political movements that have produced the dozens of political prisoners being held today. The campaigns to free political prisoners and for decarceration are not competing arenas, but rather, they form a joint struggle. All of this is based on the nature of the system: "The politics of mass and political imprisonment must never be separated from the fight against capitalism, colonialism, racism and classism [and] gender oppression," they write.

That understanding points to the necessity of fighting for deeper, overall political change.

Drawing on the experience of the Black Panther Party and its programs for survival pending revolution (Odinga was one of the Panther 21 of 1969, one of the most notorious frame-ups in US history), they emphasize the role of grassroots organiz-

ing based in a class analysis to meet social needs and move toward self-determination and economic vibrancy for oppressed communities.

The second of these essays is "Black Power Incarcerated: Political Prisoners, Genocide, and the State," by Laura Whitehorn. Drawing on her own years as a political prisoner from 1985 to 1999, she presents a poignant snapshot of the realities "under the unrelenting psychological and physical attrition those [prison] conditions cause." Pointing out that the United States holds 33 percent of the world's incarcerated women, Whitehorn relates that to the history of genocidal violence and disruption against black people in the United States. She underscores the international nature of the system of imperialism and the vital legitimacy of anticolonial struggles.

In that context, Whitehorn writes, the central question about political prisoners/POWs in the United States is not "guilt or innocence" of the criminal charges in each case, but rather people's rights and responsibilities to resist racism and colonialism. While reforms are desperately needed to stop what we can of pervasive and persistent harm, "any reforms have to be viewed through the lens of the longer-range goal,

abolishing the imperialist prison system."

In addition to emphasizing how mass incarceration and the locking up of dissidents are used to enforce an oppressive system, this collection includes analyses of resistance. The inclusion of several current and ex-prisoner activists as authors speaks volumes in itself. In addition, historian Heather Ann Thompson contributes an essay, "Lessons from Attica: From Prisoner Rebellion to Mass Incarceration and Back," that gives a gripping account of the 1971 Attica prison uprising and the state's response with a brutal massacre that killed 39 human beings and tortured many more. She explains that government officials knew that to achieve full control over the criminal justice system they would have to crush the prisoners' rights movement.

Thompson mentions a recent resurgence of struggles, with mass prisoner hunger strikes in California, Georgia and other states - a development worth a major essay in its own right. Given the pivotal role of state repression in maintaining overall social control, "what happens in our nation's prisons happens, ultimately, to all of us." Thompson calls on all who want to achieve social change to actively support prison struggles. ●

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