

# **PANTHERISM: PAN-AFRIKANIST, PAN-AMERIKANIST & PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALIST**

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Pantherism is rooted in the Black Liberation struggle, and there is a special bond between the people of Afrika and the New Afrikans of the Amerikas. Separated by force and united by common victimization under racist colonial and neo-colonial oppression, the people of the Afrikan continent and the people of the Afrikan Diaspora share a common cultural heritage and history. The Indigenous people of the Amerikas likewise share a common cultural heritage and history, including a history of resistance to invasion and genocide – cultural as well as physical. Between the Indigenous and New Afrikan people there is a special bond of shared oppression and resistance and of integration and solidarity.

All the oppressed and exploited working people of the world share a special bond of class solidarity and a common destiny to unite to reshape the future of human society by overthrowing the capitalist-imperialist system that exploits and oppresses us all and constructing a new world based upon social justice and equality. Pantherism recognizes that the division of society into classes belongs to a specific epoch of history – the Epoch of Exploitation – and this epoch has reached its highest and final stage in Capitalist-Imperialism.

## **THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE WORKING PEOPLE**

Capitalism created a new class – the modern proletariat (wage slaves) – who basically own nothing but their labor power, which they are forced to sell as a commodity to the capitalists for a fraction of its value. But the "primitive accumulation of capital" which made the capitalist class powerful was largely based on exploiting people through chattel slavery, penal servitude and indentured servitude to work the stolen lands of the "New World." This is what gave the rising capitalists the "juice" to challenge the old feudal set-up of kings and landed nobility buttressed by the Holy Church.

Exploitation is always about some form of slavery. Even the highest-paid workers produce more value than they receive in wages. Part of their day is spent doing uncompensated labor. Wages are only paid to keep the worker working hard to make a profit for their employer – an incentive for consenting to being exploited. If he's not profiting by their labor – they'll soon be laid off or fired. Basically, the workers get enough pay to survive but not enough to save-up and go into business themselves.

The capitalists created the proletariat out of the peasants being displaced from the land by the Agricultural Revolution (modern farming techniques) and independent artisans (skilled workers) reduced to wage slavery by their inability to compete with modern manufacturing techniques (the Industrial Revolution). As masses of peasants were driven

from the land as surplus labor, they crowded into urban slums in Europe or migrated to Amerika for the promise of "Free Land," landing in urban slums like Manhattan's "Lower East Side." Many were recruited in Europe and had to work off their passage at starvation wages when they got here.

The two revolutions in the mode of production – Agricultural and Industrial – created the modern world and elevated the capitalist class to the position of global domination. A super-rich ruling oligarchy appeared as capital concentrated into fewer hands – first to dominate countries and then the whole world. These ruling class families operate through corporations by controlling the dominant block of stock. The state is their dictatorship – even when the form is democratic. Every state has been a dictatorship of the ruling class. Its purpose is to serve their interests and keep the common people in line.

Under capitalism money talks – and it doesn't take "No" for an answer. All of society is enslaved to the interests of the ruling class – fight its wars and pledge allegiance to its flag. Not to do so is "treason." They own the governments, the major political parties and the mass media. They create public opinion favorable to their interests. They hold a monopoly on the use of force and violence. As Mao put it, "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Their interests and those of humanity as a whole are in contradiction – and this contradiction is intensifying. Eventually, this contradiction will be resolved in the only way that it can be – through the World Proletarian Socialist Revolution.

## **THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM**

As Economics Professor Özlem Onaran explained in a recent edition of the independent Marxist *Monthly Review*:

"There are three dimensions to the current, unprecedented global crisis of capitalism: economic, ecological, and political.

"Let us look first at the economic dimension, which will be our main concern in this article. Capitalism is facing a major realization crisis – an inability to sell the output produced, i.e., to realize, in the form of profits, the surplus value extracted from workers' labor. Neoliberalism can be viewed as an attempt initially to solve the stagflation crisis of the 1970s by abandoning the "Keynesian consensus" of the "golden age" of capitalism (relatively high social welfare spending, strong unions, and labor-management cooperation), via an attack on labor. It succeeded, in that profit rates eventually recovered in the major capitalist economies by the 1990s.

"However, the system's success, partially due to neoliberalism, in reviving profits engendered a *potential* realization crisis, due to low wages and investment. The dramatic deterioration in wages limited consumption,

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forcing workers to resort to increased borrowing. The decline in investment in physical capital went hand-in-hand with the growth of a casino economy, in which profits were funneled into speculation in financial assets. In the last two decades, the rapid financialization of the U.S. economy helped to increase demand through various wealth effects and debt-credit stimuli, despite the weakening of the underlying economy. Eventually, however, debt-led growth could not be sustained. Beginning in the summer of 2007, this solution also collapsed, and the capitalist economy has come to face a major systemic crisis, comparable to the Great Depression – except for the unprecedented state intervention moderating the visible dimensions of the downturn. Now, with the collapse of the financial mechanisms that allowed for all the debt, it is unclear how these state policies can overcome the realization crisis.

"Second, consider the ecological dimension. Recovery efforts have been centered on maintaining growth and employment through high consumption. It is assumed that we can go on consuming as before, by means of magical technological innovations engendering ever higher energy efficiency. However, today the ecological limits to growth have been scientifically established, so we cannot return to business as usual. To sustain our environment, long-term economic growth must be zero or low-equal to the growth rate of "environmental productivity." For this to be socially desirable, however, there has to be a guarantee of high employment and an equitable distribution of income. The latter is clearly at odds with capitalism.

Third, the depth of the present crisis has created holes in the legitimacy of neoliberalism. The rise in unemployment and inequality after the crisis in Western Europe, similar to the transition crisis of twenty years ago in Eastern Europe, will lead to serious political discontent..."

– "The Crisis of Capitalism in Europe, West and East,"  
Özlem Onaran, *Monthly Review*, Vol. 62 No.5

In simpler terms, capitalist-imperialism is rapidly becoming economically, ecologically and politically less viable because of the development of its own internal contradictions. Built-in to the development of modern production technology is the tendency for the rate of profit to fall as production becomes more and more capital intensive. In order to revive the sagging rate of profit, employers must downsize their labor force and cut wages. But this only provides temporary relief for the capitalists and hardships for the working class, and it sets the stage for another downward spiral of economic crisis – sparking greater political unrest. Bailouts also only provide temporary relief and set the stage for deeper crisis.

Capitalist-Imperialism is a dying system. It is dying because it has passed the stage where it should have been retired and replaced with a new political-economic system based on the needs of humanity instead of the greed of the capitalist oligarchy. Like an undead creature it prolongs its preternatural existence by sucking the blood of the living and terrorizing the peasants and townspeople into submission.

Marx and Engels, writing in 1848, noted that:

"Modern bourgeois society ...a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells... the commercial crises... by their periodical return, put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises, a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In

these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity – the epidemic of over-production."

– *The Communist Manifesto*

Suddenly Marx's writings (and Marxist writings in general) are "selling like hot cakes." Even the bourgeois press can't evade admitting that it may have been premature to pronounce communism a dead issue, as illustrated by this quote from *The Independent*:

"Whatever else one thinks of Marx, he certainly knew a thing or two about the business cycle. Were he alive now, he would surely claim his theories were being vindicated. We are, after all, witnessing the most remarkable collapse in economic activity around the world. Take Japan. In November, industrial production fell 8 per cent. That was bad enough. In December, production dropped another 9 per cent. That was even more remarkable. January's production figures, though, are simply eye-wateringly awful, showing a further 10 per cent decline. Production, then, is down almost 30 per cent in just three months, a pace of decline unprecedented in Japanese post-war economic history.

"Or how about the US, where we discovered last week that national income contracted in the final quarter of last year at an annual rate of more than 6 per cent, the biggest drop since the early 1980s. Then there's Taiwan, where exports have been in freefall in recent months. Not to mention dear old Blighty, where the economy might end up shrinking by approaching 4 per cent this year.

"The pace of decline in global economic output is extraordinary. On virtually any metric, we are seeing the worst global downturn in decades: worse than the aftermath of the first oil shock in the mid-1970s and worse than the early-1980s downswing, when the world economy had to cope with a doubling of the oil price, the tough love of monetarism and the onset of the Latin American debt crisis. Moreover, this time we cannot use the resurgence of inflation as an excuse for lost output: the credit crunch in all its many guises has seen to that. Instead, we have a world of collapsing output combined with falling prices: a world, then, of depression.

"For many years, Marxist ideas appeared to be totally irrelevant. The collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 brought to an end the era of Marxist-Leninist Communism, while China's decision to join the modern world at the beginning of the 1980s drew a line under its earlier Maoist ideology. In western economies, Marxist ideas were at their most potent after the First World War when the likes of Rosa Luxemburg could smell revolution in the air and as the Roaring Twenties gave way to the Great Depression of the 1930s. I'm not suggesting we're entering revolutionary times. However, it seems increasingly likely that the economic landscape in the years ahead will be fundamentally different from the landscape that has dominated the working lives of people like me who entered the workforce in the 1980s. We've lived through decades of plenty, where incomes have risen rapidly, where credit has been all too easily available and where recessions have been mostly modest affairs. Suddenly, we're facing a collapse in activity on a truly Marxist scale. It's difficult to imagine the world's love affair with free markets being sustained under this onslaught. The extreme nature of this downswing will change our lives for decades to come."

– "Stephen King: As capitalism stares into the abyss, was Marx right all along?" *The Independent*, March 2, 2009

But in India, where more than two-thirds of the 1.1 billion population live in dire poverty on less than a dollar a day, these are "revolutionary times," and this is how the

revolutionary Communist Party of India (Maoist), which is leading armed revolutionary struggle throughout the countryside, views the current crisis:

"The Great Depression of the 1930s was finally pulled out of its crisis after World War II through Keynesian formulas of state intervention (nationalization) and the welfare state. In those days it also had to contend with a powerful socialist Camp. But with the temporary collapse of socialism worldwide and the retreat of national liberation movements and a persisting economic crisis since the mid-1970s, the neo-liberal formulas were pushed to the fore. Reaganism, Thatcherism, et al became the fashion and Keynesianism, nationalization were much ridiculed, not to mention the socialist alternative. The 1990s saw neo-liberal economic policies peak where the market was the new god that determines everything. Fortunes were made on a scale never seen in the history of capitalism; of course, in the wake of immense impoverishment, with the rich-poor gap also becoming the widest ever. It was even portrayed as "the end of history," as though the 'golden' capitalist era is here for ever and socialism relegated only to history text books. Even welfare was now privatized with a massive mushrooming of NGOs funded by the moneybags and the state.

"Growth rates grew compared to the era of the 1970s and that became the irreversible alibi for the neo-liberal theoreticians. And with it was accompanied the gigantic leaps in communication technology in the form of the computer, internet, cell phone, TV, etc that gave it the glamour of a scientific inevitability. The high profile media portrayed none of the misery below the surface and only promoted the world of wealth and glamour. The middle class was brainwashed with this continuous bombardment, and a section even got an opportunity to eat off some crumbs from the imperialist/comprador table. The smallest dissidence was labeled 'terrorist' and callously dispensed with. Once so branded, one ceased to be human, it was as though a dangerous insect had been crushed. The poverty stricken masses too were a non-entity in this make-believe world.

"But now the fantasy world of the neo-liberal bubble has burst; and burst in a way that it is unlikely to regain for long. Meanwhile it will pull down with it millions more into the mire and suck away lives in lakhs. With one financial bubble after the other bursting the theoreticians of neo-liberalism have no answers and seem totally helpless in the face of the continuing collapse of pillar after pillar of the financial establishment. The gods of power and wealth are tumbling down.

"They have just their standard fiscal answers -- reduction of interest rates is their main tool: to increase liquidity (i.e. money for capitalists) and make available easy credit for the masses to spend and revive the slumping market. But it is not working. On Oct. 9th, for the first time ever several Central Banks acted in concert to stem the market panic. The U.S. Fed cut interest rates by 50 basic points to 1.5%; while the European Central Bank cut interest rates from 4.25% to 3.75%. The Bank of England and the Central banks of Canada, Sweden, Switzerland and China also cut interest rates within seconds of each other.

"But this was not able to stem the rot. The collapse of the banks, financial institutions and now even the industrial giants continue. Interest rates were reduced further and now in the U.S. the rate stands at 1% and in Japan at 0.2%. On Nov 6<sup>th</sup>, England once again slashed interest rates, this time by as much as 1.5% to bring it to 3% -- a 53-year low.

"In desperation they have thrown all their neo-liberal theories to the winds and governments have intervened with gigantic bail-out packages to rescue the banks, investment institutions and even companies. This is de facto resorting to the much abused 'nationalization.' As long as they were making huge profits, privatization was the

mantra; now when they are making losses and are in fact collapsing it is back to nationalization. But this Keynesian alternative is no real solution; it is a mere palliative to give immediate relief. The social democrats and the CPI/CPM type socialists may harp on these alternatives but they will have to explain the earlier failures of the Keynesian model of the 1960s resulting in the crisis which began in the 1970s, and still continues. Also they will have to explain the collapse of the Soviet Union (after capitalist restoration) and those of the then East European countries -- all of which were built on a powerful state sector.

"The present crisis which is reminiscent of the Great depression is a systemic problem of the capitalist mode of production itself. The roots of the crisis lie in the capitalist system itself for which there is no solution within it. The only real solution to revive the economy is through the very overthrow of the system and its replacement with the socialist alternative."

— Arvind, "Present Financial Crisis & the Impending Great Depression," *The People's Voice*

### THE END OF AN EPOCH

At this point, capitalist-imperialism is in a downward spiral of crisis upon crisis as the system of private exploitation of socialized labor and production grows ever more dysfunctional. Capitalism is a "one trick pony." All it can do is replicate itself -- its unrelenting law is "expand or die trying." Capital is drawn to wherever the rate of profit on investments is highest -- it will do what is most profitable in the short run even when it means self-destruction in the long run. It has no more "free will" than a dope addict. The "Founding Fathers" of the U.S. could not -- for all their talk of "Liberty" -- free their slaves so long as it was more profitable NOT to do so. Nor could the "Cold War Liberals" continue the "Welfare State" when it became more profitable to institute the "New Slavery."

"Money Talks... (even to the monopoly capitalists) and... it doesn't take NO for an answer!" Thus capitalist-imperialism breeds mass poverty instead of ever rising prosperity. It creates crisis and war... instead of security and peace. The intentions of the individuals really do not matter, because the "Bottom Line" is always about maximization of profitability.

The relative "Boom Time" of the world economy centered in the U.S. following World War II created a lot of illusions -- even in the socialist countries -- and seemed to many to disprove Marx's predictions. But Marx was not a "soothsayer," he was a social scientist analyzing a phenomenon based upon uncovering its internal contradictions and their historical development. The flaws in the first attempts at socialist reconstruction stemmed from the subjective idealism of the leaders and the masses and the limitations of the objective conditions at that time. Capitalist restoration in the former Soviet Union and the victory of the capitalist-imperialists in the "Cold War" did not alter the fact the revolution is the main trend in history and socialism will inevitably triumph over capitalism.

Ultimately, capitalism defeats itself, by turning every hand against it. Now there is basically one ruling class in the world oppressing and exploiting the great majority in every country. As the contradictions within the capitalist-imperialist system intensify and conditions worsen for the masses of people the truth that oppression breeds resistance and the consciousness that; "It Is Right To Rebel Against Exploitation And Oppression!" will work to create a

worldwide United Front Against Capitalist-Imperialism under the leadership of the international proletariat.

### THIRD WORLD RISING

Conditions are worst for the people in the neo-colonially dominated Third World countries of Asia, Afrika and Latin Amerika, where the majority must struggle to stay alive on less than a dollar a day. In many of these countries, a more or less permanent revolutionary situation exists, and in several there are ongoing Maoist-led people's wars being fought. Throughout, the Agricultural Revolution is displacing masses of peasants from the land and causing them to crowd into the urban centers and the vast shantytowns that surround them, but there are not nearly enough jobs to employ them as workers – and with the worldwide economic crisis these too are disappearing. Manipulation of food prices by the imperialists has defeated all efforts to reduce world hunger, and in some places (like Haiti) people have been reduced to eating mud cakes or grass to alleviate their hunger pains. Millions of people are forced to leave their home countries seeking work for whatever pay they can get, further depressing wages in the host countries.

Following the Sino-Soviet Split and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in People's China, Maoist factions split off from the Communist Parties that were going revisionist and created new revolutionary communist parties dedicated to waging New Democratic Revolutions to free their countries from imperialist domination, bureaucratic capitalism and the remnants of feudalism. These parties see their struggles as part of the World Proletarian Socialist Revolution to end the criminal rule of capitalist-imperialism. Most successful have been the struggles led by the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Following the strategy of surrounding the cities with the countryside, the Maoists lead the peasants in seizing the land of the big landlords and corporations and creating liberated zone of red political power and guerrilla zones where the government forces are ambushed and their weapons taken. The armed peasants create their own courts and civic development programs and defend their villages with people's militia. Regular People's Liberation Armies fight to extend and defend the liberated zones by consolidating red power in the guerrilla zones. Within the government-controlled areas, the Maoists build mass organization of every type and win over the trade unions to a revolutionary consciousness and militant conduct of the class struggle. In particular the Maoists concentrate on organizing among the youth, women and ethnic minorities.

On the international level, the Maoist strategy is to surround the imperialist countries with the Third World cutting off the source of their super-profits and causing them to overextend their military forces, ruining their economies and pushing capitalist-imperialism deeper into its downward spiral of crisis. The main event in the World Proletarian Socialist Revolution however, will be the rising of the masses in the imperialist countries – particularly in the U.S., the sole imperialist superpower – to bring the system down.

### THE MAIN EVENT

The U.S. has been almost constantly at war since before it was founded. The seeds of the Amerikan Revolution were sown in the French and Indian wars over possession of the

North Amerikan colonies. Having defeated the French at great expense, the British "Lords of Trade" decided the colonists should bear the cost through taxation and tailor their economic development to serve British imperialist interests. The Amerikan colonists, on the other hand, saw no need to have to pay for protection from a threat that no longer existed, nor to restrict their economic development to benefit the mother country. But there was more to it.

Feudalism's weakest link was in the Amerikan colonies, and the rising bourgeoisie sought to break the chain that bound them to this moribund system. The Amerikan Revolution was very much a part of the World Bourgeois Democratic Revolution. The high-sounding call for "Liberty" and "Government of the People, by the People and for the People" that rallied the poor and working people to the side of the merchants, lawyers and master artisans clamoring for "Independence" opened the way for a more profound revolution in human social evolution – particularly the concept that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed" (as opposed to God). Having established the "Right of Revolution," the bourgeoisie set the stage for their own eventual overthrow by those they exploit and dictate to.

In a system based upon chattel and wage slavery, the governed hardly consent to their exploitation and denial of rights except by submitting to the force (and threat of force) employed by the state. As Mao Tse-tung said; "Political Power Grows From the Barrel of a Gun!" In essence, that's what a state is – hired guns, whose job it is to keep the exploited oppressed and the exploiting class in power. The only exception to this rule is when the exploited seize power and use their guns to dictate to the exploiters and would-be exploiters and allow the People to revolutionize society to eliminate all exploitation. This is the only way that "Liberty, Equality and Justice for All" can be realized.

It took the Amerikan bourgeoisie over a century to end chattel slavery – and still the Black masses were kept down and oppressed under a racist caste system of "Jim Crow" segregation and KKK terror forcing them into virtual serfdom as "share-croppers." It took another century for them to end lynchings and "Jim Crow" – only when "share-cropping" was no longer economically viable and Blacks were needed as unskilled labor in the basic industries. But they were still oppressed by de facto segregation, institutionalized racism, "red-lining," ghettoization and systematic police brutality and murder. As MLK pointed out, all of this was in stark contradiction to what the ruling class claims the U.S. stands for.

How can we understand racism except in the context of its economic benefit to the capitalist ruling class? Capitalism created racism, and it can bend over backwards to deny it, but it can't do without it. Particularly now when the basic industries have been largely sent overseas and the masses of Black people are considered surplus labor – as are poor and unskilled working people of all ethnic backgrounds.

The strategy of "Criminalization of the Poor" and mass incarceration is rooted in the reality that the monopoly capitalists cannot profitably exploit the majority of the people on the planet. In fact the percentage is rapidly increasing. As wealth concentrates into fewer and fewer hands, the numbers of destitute people grows. As the old saying goes; "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer."

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You can't assimilate en masse into a downsizing economy. A few individuals can and the system can point to them and say; "racism is a thing of the past, look, you've got a Black president and Black cops shooting up your ghetto, what more do you want?" This is just neo-colonialism. It's putting black faces in high places to obscure the reality of a still deeply racist society based on super-exploitation of the masses of people of color.

The Amerikan Revolution of 1776 can only be completed by the World Proletarian Socialist Revolution. Only socialism can sweep away racism and institute social justice for all. In this period, it is impossible to make revolution in the U.S. outside of the context of world revolution because the U.S. is now a global empire. This makes revolution here the main event in the World Proletarian Socialist Revolution.

### THE PRESENT TASKS

There is not yet a revolutionary situation in the U.S., but we are headed towards one. This is happening independent of what we do. Our task is to prepare the People to seize the time when it arrives. Sun Tzu, the ancient sage of the "Art of War" stated that, "Battles and Wars are Won or Lost Before They Are Fought!" And Mao summed up "Revolution" as "Create Public Opinion Seize Power!" To create public opinion favorable to socialist revolution we need to create a revolutionary mass movement and our own media. To lead such a movement we need to create a vanguard party that is rooted in the masses and draws its strength from the People.

Given the historical conditions in the U.S., the New Afrikans must play a leading role in this – not in some mechanical way but by setting a revolutionary example and uniting all who can be united through the United Panther Movement (UPM). Pantherism is applicable to any oppressed community. In methodology it combines creating "Serve The People" (STP) survival programs and building community-based People's Power with relentless revolutionary agitation, education and organizing – building "ghetto 2 ghetto" intercommunalism and solidarity.

Our social base is the urban poor and marginalized workers, the lumpen-proletariat, youth generally and oppressed ethnic groups. Our "turf" is the "bad side of town," the "ghetto," the "barrio," the "rez" and the "slave pens of oppression." Wherever poor and oppressed people are concentrated – that's our constituency. We know the poor cannot on our own overthrow this rotten system, but we can act as a catalyst on the proletariat as a whole and on the masses of people to rise up and take history into their hands. As Mao pointed out, "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire!"

In simplest terms *Communism is the extension of human rights to include all human needs*. So our fight must necessarily center on the defense and extension of human and democratic rights, particularly in opposition to the "New Slavery" and the strategy of criminalization and mass incarceration of the poor. We must struggle to transform the "Slave Pens of Oppression" into "Schools of Liberation," and we must build a mass movement to fight for prisoners' human and democratic civil rights.

In every community we should build chapters of the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) with prisoners and their

families as the core. But this coalition should include legal professionals and law students, anti-death penalty activists, community organizers, clergy, educators, health care providers and others concerned with the inhumane treatment of prisoners and lack of actual rehabilitation in the so-called "correctional facilities." Constant exposure of conditions, beatings, torture, neglect, profiteering and corruption must be carried on to provide a measure of protection for prisoner activists and to expose the unfitness of the bourgeois political parties to govern.

We don't want anarchy, riots and individualist acts of violence. We want to build solid organization uniting all factions of the imprisoned population and backed up by strong community-based organization. We want to hold the states and federal government to the internationally agreed upon standards for human rights and the treatment of incarcerated citizens. Our main goal is to transform the prisoners themselves into dedicated and disciplined fighters, activists and organizers for the people so that when they get out they will be assets to their communities and the people's struggle.

We want to: *transform the oppressed communities into base areas of cultural, social and political revolution in the context of building a worldwide united front against capitalist-imperialism*. This means building different types of organizations that take on different aspects of the struggle. These organizations are of three general types; vanguard, intermediate and mass. Vanguard (leadership) organizations are highly disciplined and work through other organizations as well as play an independent role representing the most advanced ideological and political line. Mass organizations have an open membership, like unions or neighborhood committees, and intermediate organizations are based on programmatic unity – but not necessary ideological and political unity.

All three types of organizations must be built from the grassroots up. This requires the highest degree of initiative and self-reliance on the part of individual comrades and collectives in implementing the general line and policies established by the revolutionary headquarters. We must also generate our own funding.

Central to the task of building organization is creating our own media, starting with simple newsletters and building them up to mass-distribution newspapers as well as other forms of print and electronic media. We must all work on developing our skills at writing and illustration, and this goes hand in hand with developing political study and discussion circles. We must be our own liberators and develop collective leadership. We must train ourselves in the skills of agitation and organizing.

We live in a country where there are more guns than people, and the government has flooded the oppressed communities with military grade weapons as part of their strategy to get us to kill each other and neutralize ourselves. We must take this strategy head on. As Sun Tzu said, "to defeat an enemy you must defeat his strategy with one of your own." They seek to criminalize the poor and institute fratricidal violence – so we must do the opposite. We must transform the lumpen street and prison tribes into revolutionary mass organizations with a "Serve The People" orientation and eliminate "gang bangin'," "dope dealin'" and "robbin'" and "stealin'" from the People.



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To this end the NABPP-PC is calling for the formation of a Red Fist Alliance (RFA) among the members of the various street and prison tribes to promote peace and unity as part of the United Panther Movement (UPM). The RFA would be an intermediate organization between the Panther vanguard and the masses of street tribe members. We must change not only the orientation of the tribes but also the public's perception of them -- overcoming the stereotype promoted in the capitalist mass media intended to "demonize" all gang members as vicious homicidal thugs.

Culture is an important weapon in creating public opinion and we must utilize it to the fullest. We must wage a "Total Assault on Capitalist-Imperialist Death Culture" and strike "Blows Against the Empire" with songs, poetry, art and theater. Our policy must be to "Let 100 Flowers Bloom" and utilize all styles and mediums of culture -- and create new ones. We must create new venues, such as coffee houses and hip hop clubs, community art centers and web sites.

Hand in hand with this, we must create our own social welfare programs, taking up the slack caused by government cut backs and demonstrating the principles of socialist self-reliance. We must organize social-political events around Mayday (International Workers' Day), International Women's Day (March 15<sup>th</sup>) and Black August, as well as other events designed to build proletarian consciousness and unity.

And we must build community-based and intercommunally-linked people's power creating a situation of dual power in the oppressed communities. This includes creating our own people's courts and security forces in the oppressed communities. We must create a contrast to the corruption and oppression of the cops and the courts that actually

works to reduce crime and rehabilitate criminals through political education and community service.

### GOING INTERNATIONAL

To become truly powerful, the United Panther Movement needs to be built internationally and work to build the worldwide united front against capitalist-imperialism. We need to "Walk on Two Legs," organizing in the urban centers of both the imperialist and Third World countries (as well as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World). The natural bonds of Pan-Afrikanism and Pan-Amerikanism need to be strengthened as does Proletarian Internationalism.

We need to build "Ghetto 2 Ghetto" intercommunalism and solidarity. The key to this is uniting with the immigrants and people visiting this country and bringing them into our movement. We need to employ the internet and use it to spread Pantherism. Where our community organizing is successful, we need to sponsor the establishment of sister STP survival programs in another community where the need is greatest. We need sponsor youth and activists from abroad coming here to get technical training and education to take back to their home communities to serve the people. And youth and activists from the ghettos here need to spend time abroad as volunteers. In this way we will build strong bonds of solidarity and internationalist consciousness.

To defeat capitalist-imperialism we must see it as a whole system and defeat it everywhere. Only then can we break free of the Epoch of Exploitation and move forward to a higher stage of human social evolution. The future can be bright, if we dare to make it so.

DARE TO STRUGGLE DARE TO WIN!

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!



*Transform the Prison Plantations  
Into Schools of Liberation*

## 41 DAYS IN HELL

By Joseph J. Taylor

October 12, 2010

SNOWBLIND

Dear Editor:

I was one of the first 125 Pa. State prisoners transferred to Virginia from SCI-Graterford on 2/13/10. The following is my story.

On February 9, 2010, the blizzard struck. The jail opened up as usual. I went to work as normal all the while thinking I might be able to make a few extra pennies on the snow removal detail. After lunch at 1 O'clock when the jail didn't

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open up I wasn't too surprised and although I wouldn't be able to make the few extra pennies, I was kind of pleased with the prospect of being laid-in for a day or two with pay! I figured I'd get some typing done and just relax.

Then the guards and counselors came around and doubled-locked us in! I thought -- and I'm sure the rest of the prisoners thought the same -- that the jail had gone into emergency mode do to the blizzard.

So on Wednesday there was no cause for alarm when the jail didn't open up. The guards and staff brought breakfast around and I made me some oatmeal. At lunchtime we were given some lunch meat on a role and I decided I would skip lunch and hook something up for diner. So I put the sandwich in the window for later. Sometime around 3 or 3:30 pm I heard a lot of noise on the block and I got my mirror and looked out on the block to see what was going on. I saw what I thought was guards shakin' down! I immediately began hiding my contraband while cursing and wondering how they got enough guards together for a shake-down during a blizzard!

Just as I was removing the contraband curtain from my cell door, the door opened and outside was two Unit Managers, a Lieutenant, and two guards from Security! I began laughing because they've caught me in the act of taking down my curtain when one of the Unit Managers announces in a tone as if my life sentence had just been vacated, that I had been selected by Central Office for transfer to Virginia. I looked at them as my heart stopped and I went numb as a buzzing began in my head. I heard myself saying: "You're kidding. Right!" And the Lt. answered "No." I stopped smiling as I looked at them and considered my options... one of which was fight! But then I looked into the eyes of the two guards from security and realized that they were there to see that I go; one way, or the other!

So, at that moment I decided the best way to fight this transfer would be a Food-Strike... Beginning with lunch! I stated to the Lt. who had come into my cell to talk to me: "I guess I don't have a choice." to which she replied: "No. You don't have a choice."

\*I was told I had five minutes to put my property in three trash bags and to get to the Property Room. At the Property Room there was a line of surprised transfer victims all the way down the maintenance corridor and they were still coming! We were lied to and told that we may only take three boxes of property; the rest of our property would be stored. After forcing us to throw away all of our open commissary items and packing what we could get into the three boxes, we were then given an Information Packet. In this packet was a two page letter telling us what to expect at the Green Rock facility.. It also stated that all excess legal property would be shipped with us and that the only open commissary we could not take was liquid because it may spill. None of our property was inventoried nor did we receive a copy of a Property Inventory sheet as per policy.

The boxes our televisions, word processors and radios were packed in was not marked with what was inside as required by policy. I was then taken to the "New Side" and put in cell 120 on lower "I" block, a cold empty cell, for the next 2 days. We were not let out of our cells for exercise or showers until Friday, the 12th. By time we left the prison -- (Feb. 13th. at 1:50 am) -- I had missed a total of eight meals. We were

issued new thermal underwear at Graterford for the transfer due to the cold weather. We were transported to SCI-Camp Hill for the change over to the Virginia authorities. We were redressed by Va. guards in lightweight (summer) clothing after taking our thermal underwear. We were then placed on buses that had been sitting for hours in the cold.

### THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

The trip down took more than 16 hours! -- (They really milked the \$.55 per mile pay) -- We were transported in full restraints -- (handcuffs, waist-chains, black-box and leg shackles) -- on buses that resembled live-stock carriers. The buses had no windows! Only oval portholes up at the ceiling... slave ships on wheels! The area for us prisoners -- (the haul) -- was caged-off from the driver with diamond mesh and sheet metal. The door in this partition had a small window in it which was covered over with a piece of notebook paper just before we would pull off so that we could not see where we were going. So we traveled in near darkness for more than 16 hours. Because our eyes could not focus on the movement our brains we're sensing, most of us came down with motion sickness. We "high-balled!"

It was cold, cramped and dark... probably much the same as it was on those slave ships carrying kidnapped slaves to America 450 years ago! I'm average height and I could hardly get my legs behind the seat in front of me. My knees were sore for days after the trip.

Sometime around 3pm, we arrived at a jail called Cold Springs. Here we were to be fed and allowed to use the facilities. We were greeted with a gauntlet of guards holding AR-15s, shotguns, and barking attack dogs stationed all around! One bus at a time was off-loaded, fed and reloaded and then the next.

Once inside, we were seated in chairs along three walls with little tables in front of each. On each table was a bagged lunch and juice. The handcuffs, black-box, waist-chains, and leg shackles remained in place making it impossible for us to either eat or use the toilet!

Then it was back on the road for another 3 to 4 hours!

### THE ARRIVAL

Sometime around 6pm we arrived at Green Rock Correctional Center. The temperature was in the teens and with the wind blowing it was down in the single digits. Again we were greeted with a gauntlet of guards with AR-15s, shotguns, and barking attack dogs... the only thing that was missing was the firemen spaying us with water hoses! One by one each bus off-loaded it's cargo. One by one we each had to cite our name and number as we left the bus and wait outside it in the freezing cold until there were ten of us. All the staff were bundled up in heavy winter coats, hats, scarves, and gloves. One of the dogs even had on a coat! And all we prisoners had were (summer) short-sleeved two-piece uniforms. Welcome to Virginia!

The group of ten would then be escorted about 30 yards in full restraints and then stopped and wait until the group ahead moved on. Then we would move another 30 yards and stop. We were told to stand shoulder to shoulder while drug sniffing dogs were walked pass us 4-5 times each until the more experienced dog gave a false alert. That prisoner would be pulled from the line and the rest of us escorted to the door of the visiting room.

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One by one we entered the building -- (which has a stone-covered driveway right up to the door) -- where we had to again cite our name and Pa. DOC numbers into a video camera. From there we proceeded on inside where the officials were forcing prisoners to get haircuts and shaves whether they needed it or not. Even prisoners whose religion forbid the shaving of beards were forced to shave.

I didn't need a haircut or shave. I saw three officials "working" the crowd who turned out to be the Warden, Deputy Warden, and the Regional Director. I began trying to counter what they were doing by quietly chanting to different prisoners ("Take-it-to-the-hole"). In groups of twos, threes, and fives, they allowed themselves getting their hair cut and beards shaved. As I watched these guys fold like paper towels, I switched tactics and got loud and demanded to be taken to the hole. I had heard them threaten guys with the hole so I began asking where the hole was! Which way was it?! You keep talking about this hole; where is it?! Let's go! I had saw one young-blood go to the hole but came right back out! So I decided to lead by example! I informed the Regional Director that I was on food-strike in protest of my illegal transfer. He had gotten upset with me countering every piece of B.S. he presented to me and me cutting him off! I was placed in segregation for being on food-strike. Once in seg, I was stripped of everything! Bedding, clothes, shoes, even my eyeglasses! I was naked my first night at Green Rock. First they took my underwear and shoes but left me with the jumpsuit. That's when I discovered that I had defecated on myself. I had to wash in the toilet because they had turned off the water to the cell.

For five days they tried to convince me to eat, telling me what good people they were; what great food they have, etc. The whole time I'm looking at them knowing full well prisoncrats are not good people and no prison has good food! At the same time, they were telling me: ("We're not sending you back.") and each time I'd tell them: "Dead or alive, I'm going back!" For five nights I had to sleep either sitting at the desktop or sleep on a cold hard steel shelf! I would pull my arms inside the jumpsuit, then pull the jumpsuit up over my head and hold it closed with my hand, and finally, cover my feet with my pants legs. I was like a turtle inside it's shell! I would then rest my elbows on my thighs and slowly move from side-to-side as a speed skater would. This generated heat inside the jumpsuit and I would then go back to a place in time before I messed up my life! 1971. The Philadelphia Navel Base where I worked for the summer. I would do this for hours. Many times they would come to me about something and it would take me a few moments to get back to the present!

On the 14th, I called on God to help me! I began by acknowledging the fact that like so many others, "I only call on you in a time of need. But you see my situation. I need you! I need your help; I can't do this one by myself!" I told him that I wasn't ready to die; that I wanted to see my children, grandchildren as well as my sister and nephew one last time. I also told him that although I didn't want to die, if it was his will, then I place myself in his hands! He answered me in a very quiet and calm voice that he had been here the whole time! And in that moment I knew he wasn't speaking about just that moment but all my Life! I broke down in tears knowing I didn't deserve his love and I asked for his forgiveness for all the wrong I'd done in my life! Although he

did not take me out of the situation immediately, I did feel a sense of calmness come over me.

On Feb. 18th I was moved to the Medical Unit and placed in an isolation cell. Here they really put their thing down! The water to the cell was turned completely off! In the seg-cell, even though the water was turned off, I discovered that by pushing the water button and sucking on the faucet I could get the water left in the pipes. In the isolation cell this was not the case. Once the water was turned off, that was it.

Three times a day the guard would turn on the water, but he never told me it was on and there was no indication that it was on. On several occasions I became so delirious from thirst, I'd wake up and stumble to the sink and frantically push the water buttons while sucking on the faucet trying desperately to get a drink of water! I could taste the water but just couldn't get it in my mouth!

My lips and tongue were swollen, I had lost my voice and still, I refused to eat. I had resolved myself that I was going to die somewhere in Va. and my family would never know the truth. Although God had comforted me in the seg-cell, I wasn't so sure it was God that spoke to me or my mind playing tricks! Although I had begun to believing!

And in that isolation cell I began to believe I was a dead man! I would lay back down after not being able to get any water thinking I'll never wake up again. Finally it got to the point where I had to drink my own urine! And then I had to drink from the toilet bowl because I had no more urine!

This isolation cell had a video camera mounted inside so all of this was monitored and recorded. Once they saw I just wasn't going to eat -- even when they locked the trays of food in the cell with me -- they then turned the water on to keep me .from drinking from the toilet which posed a serious health risk. But then I was denied toilet tissue! When a person goes without food for an extended period of time, gas builds up in the stomach and you're constantly passing that gas. It wasn't long before I became chafed and raw!

They tried every thing they could think of to break me. They offered me their best prison job -- buffing the housing unit floor! They even offered me a wife! They sent their female guards at me! When none of this worked their true nature came out! They put trays with dog food in my cell! They put a hangman's noose outside the cell! Then they put a sheet over a coat rack or something and made it look like a Klansman and placed that outside the cell!! But they're nice people!

### THE OUTER LIMITS

On Feb. 16th, myself and 16 other PA prisoners was transferred five hours further to Red Onion State Prison. I was so weak from lack of food and water I had to be carried onto the bus by two guards. I passed out 3 times enroute.

Upon our arrival, the others were placed in segregation while I was placed in the Medical Unit, Cell #1(isolation). It wasn't long before the Warden, Major, Captain and several others were outside the cell threatening me with: "If you don't eat, come Monday we're going to strip you down to your boxers and cuff you to that bunk and force feed you." I replied: "Get the Court order!" They replied: "We don't need a Court Order!" During this exchange I realized the significance of the transfer. By transferring me, Green Rock in effect, reset the food-strike clock to zero! Although the



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officials know you're on food-strike, they only count the meals you miss at their facility.

Having realized at Green Rock that something was wrong in that the food-strike was not having the anticipated affect and, noting on the bus ride to Red Onion, that the other 16 prisoners needed (guidance), I, allowed them to "think" I was intimidated by their scare tactics and agreed to eat in exchange for a shower. They gleefully excepted. I was given regular food which I should not have been given. When it came time for the first bowel movement on Sunday mid-morning, I paid dearly! I'll spare you the sordid details... Suffice it to say that I now know what it is to give birth! -- to quadruplets!! I was in "labor" for about 35 minutes the first time. I got hemorrhoids from the first bowel movement and after the third, I had to stop eating in order to give myself a rest. I informed the nurses of my need for something for hemorrhoids but was ignored. Being that both isolation cells are monitored by video cameras mounted inside the cells, all of this was monitored and recorded. During my first bowel movement in cell #1, I could hear at least two people laughing as I struggled.

By eating; on March 1st, I was moved to the building where the other PA. prisoners were, which was part of my plan and reason for eating. However, approx. two hours later I was returned to the Medical Unit and placed in Isolation cell #9 supposedly for the purpose of seeing the psychologists. However, after meeting with the psychs I remained in the isolation cell. After being placed in this second cell in isolation, I was finally given writing materials, envelopes, and law library request forms -(I had been denied all forms of communication since my arrival in Va. on the 13th.). The first thing I ordered was the Interstate Corrections Compact and a meeting with the Institution's Attorney. Once I got the ICC it wasn't long before I learned why the food-strike wasn't working; Attachment 4;8 at 26. A media block on all prisoners transferred under the Compact! (unconstitutional!).

After taking notes, I drafted my Civil Rights Complaint against PA. on toilet tissue and gave it to the guard for mailing not knowing if it would be or not. Nine days later, I received my docket number (Taylor v. Rendell, et al., 10-105). It had been mailed and I had made contact with the outside world! I had also drafted up a suit against VA. and it's DOC and on 3/8/10 I resumed my food-strike just as I planned! The Warden, Major, Regional Director and others were back at my cell wanting to know why I wasn't eating now! I gave them a laundry list of what was wrong. (Prolonged isolation, sensory depravation, no outside exercise, no showers, no change of clothes, no seat and desk at which to sit and eat or write, no clean linen, and the food was garbage!)

The psychologist took notes and when I was done stated that he would meet with each department head to address my concerns. I started getting showers, clean clothes, the cell was swept and mopped once and the food got a little better. I still didn't get any outside exercise and they never did change the linen.

### MEDICAL

On 3/2/10 I was "assessed" by the medical department as a new intake/transferee, and was seen by a Nurse Practitioner - Nurse Ball Frip. I informed her about my feet and she

attributed the pain and swelling to my food strike and note that they are going down. She had never seen my feet before.

I then told her about the infection in my eyes stating: "It's in both eyes but, it's the left one that's the worst right now." I also told her about the rash on my face and lips and that it was due to mold in my cell's window back at SCI-G.

She asked me if I was asthmatic and I replied yes. I could not recall the names of either medication I had received in the past for either my eyes or face. She stated that she would check my file for the names.

A few days later a nurse arrived at the cell with an inhaler and eye-drops. The first time I used the drops I put the drops in the left eye only. Afterwards, I realized I should have put some drops in the right eye before it gets as bad as the left eye. The next time the drops are brought, I put (a) drop in the right eye and (2) in the left. The nurse quickly informed me that the drops are prescribed for the (left) eye. I informed the nurse that the infection is in both eyes and that I know what I'm doing. This is Sunday night. Monday morning when the male nurse delivered the eye-drops, he told me that he had been informed that I was putting the drops in the right eye. He informed me that the eye-drops are prescribed for the left eye. I pointed out to this nurse that the infection is in both eyes and I'm treating the right eye before it gets as bad as the left. I also presented the logic that if the nurse had heard me correctly, would she have prescribed a bottle of medication for the left eye and another for the right?! He replied that I'm a grown man and I administered one drop to each eye.

They didn't bring me the eye-drops the next two times but when they brought it back, the nurse informs me that she checked with nurse Ball and she states that if I put the drops in both eyes, it wont last as long. I just stopped using the eye-drops after that realizing that there is just no reasoning with stupidity. Instead, I sent a request to the medical department concerning the matter. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, two guards asked me if I wanted to see the doctor. I'm thinking this is because of my 8 day food strike. When we get there, nurse Ball is there. It's not long before the eye-drops come up. She tells me that I never said anything about the right eye. I tell her I did. I know I did and quote myself. She then goes back to the logic of using the drops in both eyes will cause the bottle not to last as long and ask me if that makes sense. I didn't answer that trick question!

She then states that she is going to order the "ointment" for both eyes -- this is what she was supposed to prescribe the first time -- and says she's also going to order some type of medication for my lips that's a steroid after exclaiming that you don't put the ointment for my face on my lips... Something I've been doing since I had the rash. It's the same infection!

Two days later I get a receipt for \$4.00 medical co-pay charge. I also get the response to my request to medical. It was responded to the very day I was taken back to see nurse Ball. They held it for two days. The response stated that I was scheduled for "follow up" treatment.

So I was charged for nurse Ball to correct her mistake during the initial intake/transfer assessment for a chronic illness as a follow-up treatment. All of which are exempt from co-pay charge! I had also been seen by the dentist as intake/transfer assessment and was charged \$2.00 medical co-pay.

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That was it! This was the 18th. I refused all medications from that point on. I told them to (terminate) all medications for-me! I then just out-right ignored all medical personnel!

### THE GO-BACK

On March 22nd, an officer Ramey came on at 6pm. The first thing he does was to ask me if I had any mail to send out. Hum... No other officer has asked me if I had mail to go out! A short while later he asks me again if I had mail to go out. Again I tell him no and now I'm wondering what is up with this dude. I suspected he was asking because they read the mail and that would give him something to do and, I can't spell worth a lick!

Once I lay down to go to sleep, this guard begins to wake me up every half hour to see if I'm okay. I keep the cover over my head and don't answer him. Sometime during this he asks: "Where's Mr. Taylor at? Right there in cell nine!" And he and the other officer laugh. Finally, at about 5:30AM, I get fed up with his childish actions and confront him. Officer Ramey is obviously quite young. When I confront him about waking me up during the night he replies that he's just doing his job. I then point out the fact that he is harassing me, and the conversation quickly becomes heated. During our exchange, he asks me if I can spell, (now I'm certain that they've been reading my mail and that's why he keeps asking me if I have any mail to send out). This exchange ends with him calling me a "nigger." I then demand some Informal Complaint forms. He promptly asks how many I want, and I tell him six.

I had been trying to get these forms since I arrived, but had only managed to obtain one. Officer Ramey promptly left and returned in less than five minutes with the six forms. He slides them between the door and the door jam. When I attempt to take them, he refuses to let go of them! I had to literally pull them from his grasp! Once I had them, I made up the bed and then rolled up the mattress. I knelt alongside the bed and wrote him up. When I'm done, I write on toilet tissue: "Food-Strike 4 CO Ramey," and I tape it to the cell door when the shift changes. The sign is noted by the male nurse. A little while later, I calm down enough to realize that I have too much legal writing to do. I decide to change my mind about the food-strike and take the sign down.

Shortly after breakfast, an Officer Vanover comes to the cell and asks for ALL of my personal property. All I had was a manilla envelope with my legal notes and filings. I gave him this, my hygiene items and shower shoes. I was left with nothing but the clothes I had on and the bedding and a wash cloth!

I thought they were implementing their hunger-strike protocol. That's when they take everything from you, and when you start eating, they give you a little back each time you eat. So I figured they would be coming back for the rest of the stuff. I was also thinking I really messed up! I had too much writing to do to be without my pen! All I could do was pace trying to figure this one out. I just "threaten" to hunger-strike and they implement the hunger-strike protocol!? How am I to "earn" the stuff back when I'm already eating?!

I lay down and covered my head so as not to let them see I'm worried. I eat the rest of the day. The next morning the regular officer of the Medical Unit comes on. When he comes with the breakfast tray, I tell him that they took all my property. He looks at me, blinks a couple of times, and he

says: "When they do that, it usually means you're leaving." I reply: "I ain't going nowhere!"

I then asked him to find out what I have to do to get my property back. He says: "Okay, but it usually means you're leaving." A few minutes later, he returns saying: "You might as well strip now, you're leaving!" I look at him for some sign that this is a trick or something, but he looks sincere as he says: "I told you so!" So I strip as he and the other officer question the necessity of strip-searching me when I've been in the isolation cell the whole time.

A short while later, I am back in the original cell I was put in when I arrived – stripping again and changing into a gold transport jumpsuit. Still, I don't believe I'm going back to "The Fort" – Graterford. On my way into the cell I see a small box on a cart with my Red Onion I.D. number on it – but its missing the last digit!? I point this out to the guards, but they ignore me.

I was then escorted out of the building and to the car. One of the guards standing at the car exclaims: "You still not eating?!" I replied: "I'm eating, man!" (For some reason this question irritated me.) I then asked the guard escorting me where they were taking me. He replied: "You ever hear of Marion?" I exclaimed: "Illinois?!" and he said: "Yep!"

Just the previous morning – (when I had placed the hunger-strike sign on the cell door) – Officer Dye asked me if I knew how the state of Virginia was shaped. I couldn't recall. So he drew an outline of the state on the glass of the door and pointed out where Tennessee and Kentucky were and that I was at the very most southern tip of Virginia. He stated that within an hour I could be in either one of those other states. He stated that people up north in Richmond – (where their central office is) – couldn't care less about me raising Cane down here!

So when the guard said Marion I'm thinking detention in an underground super-max [ed – the Federal Detention Center in Marion, Illinois] and that I'd really dug myself into a hole! I was also trying to recall if I'd seen Illinois on the list of states that are part of the ICC. Then the guard laughs and says we're going about two hours away, that his part (of the trip) lasts about two hours.

At three minutes after 8AM, I'm in the car. At 8:07AM we pull out. At about 10AM we arrive at Marion State Prison in VA! We drive around to the back and into a sally-port where a van enters from the other side. I'm handed off to two guards, and I see Regional Director Posters standing off to the side. Just two weeks ago – on the 9th – during my second strike, he had asked me if I was ready to go back to Green Rock. The officers greet each other and one of the two from Red Onion ask how are things at "The Rock." So I'm going back to Green Rock. Okay, I just won't eat!!

After swapping cuffs, chains, and shackles, I'm helped into the van. A large box of what must be my files is placed into the back of the van. I sit sideways so I can keep my eyes on them in case they are plotting to assassinate me. At 10:37AM we pull away from Marion. The one officer even asks me what kind of music I wanted to hear. I thought for a moment and then said, "Jazz." He replied that they didn't have any Jazz and asked what other kind of music I'd like to hear. I told him it didn't matter. I was thinking: "They don't have any Jazz stations! I damn well have to get the Hell out of this state!"

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At 1:23PM we arrive at Green Rock. The guard riding shotgun asked if I was going to eat. I replied, "No!" I decided that even if I am going back to PA I should not eat just to keep continuity.

I entered the Segregation Unit from the rear. I stopped at #9 Cell and holler at Spider, whose still there, and tell him I'm back from Red Onion. I'm placed in Cell #4, and the guards ask if I want something to eat. I tell them, "No!"

I'm not given any sheets, pillow case or blankets, and I don't ask for any. Once I'm settled in, I and the other PA prisoners exchange information about what's been happening. I tell them about asking for a copy of the Interstate Corrections Compact and to read it. Everything they need to know to get back to PA is written there. I still don't believe I'm heading back, even when the brother in #5 Cell tells me there's a shipment going back to PA in the morning. I refuse dinner, and about 4:30AM a guard wakes me up telling me: "It's that time!" and asks if I want to eat. I tell him, "No!"

At about 5:15AM, I am standing with seven other PA prisoners in the sally-port beside the bus. Warden Dillman arrives. I watch him the whole time as he tries hard not to look at me. Finally, he does look at me, smiles, and says, "Hi!" and then looks away. As he looks away, the smile drops from his face. Priceless! He had insisted that he was not going to send me back when I said, "Dead or alive, I'm going back!" But I'm still not sure I really am going back to PA. I could be going to another VA jail or another state for that matter.

I board the bus and as I walk up the isle I look at each face to see who I know, and more importantly to see if these guys are from "The Fort." I don't know any of the faces, at first. Then I see one that looks vaguely familiar. I sit next to him. I ask if he's from Graterford, and he nods and says, "Yeah!" I think to myself, "Okay! But who are the rest of these guys, are they the last of the VA prisoners, and the two of us have been thrown in with them to be transported somewhere else?!"

I look to the rear of the bus at every face and I don't recognize anyone! I'm worried. Out of all these faces, I don't recognize any of them! Twice more I look to the rear, then finally, I see one face I know! I blurt out: "Stretch!" He gives me a wave. Then I recognize another; "Kenny!, JT!, JR!" We are laughing and greeting each other, and I go back to where they are, and there are others from "The Fort." One of them tells me we are going back! Yes! Now I believe it!

At approximately 6AM, we pull out. This time the bus has windows for human beings. We can see the world this time! Behind us is a 4 wheel drive vehicle with a trailer that has our property.

Sometime around 10AM, we arrive at a jail named Coffeewood. Here we were turned over to the care of PA guards from Camp Hill. There was a line of portable toilets for us to use. This time the shackles, the black-boxes and waist-chains were removed so that we could use the toilets. After we used the toilets, we were escorted to the Dining Hall where we were fed and treated like human beings this time! Twenty-eight of us had been returned, and while we were still in the Dining Room, more PA prisoner-victims were brought in and fed in the next Dining Room.

Once we were done eating, we were taken to another room where we changed from of VA (summer) uniforms to the PA jumpsuits that had just been taken off by the PA prisoners on their way to Green Rock. We were then loaded onto the Camp Hill bus. We were alongside of the bus on which they were loading the PA prisoners going to VA. Some guys signaled to them that they were making a big a mistake!

Finally, we pulled out, and after what seemed like an eternity, we arrived at SCI-Camp Hill at about 5PM. We left Camp Hill at around 6:30PM and arrived at Graterford at 8:12PM. Four of us were from the same housing unit – D-Block. We got back on the Block right at lock-up time. Everyone was shocked at my appearance. By 10PM, I was locked in a nasty, dirty cell, and I was pleased! I was back – Yeah! After 41 days in Hell!

### PURGATORY

Because I refused to cooperate (concur) with the transfer, my Timberland Pro Series boots, prescription eyeglasses, underwear and \$11 were stolen by the Commonwealth of Virginia. I believe that an Officer Crews, who was working the Seg-Unit at Green Rock, got my boots. As punishment, the PA officials – the Graterford guards specifically – have stolen my keyboard and recorder. Nine boxes of my legal materials are being held hostage by the Property Room Sergeant. My Sony Flat Screen TV, word processor and radio were damaged during transit. My property was unpacked and inventoried at Green Rock (even though I was not present), and they didn't bother to repack it with the protective wrappings.

All told, I suffered more than \$200.00 in property loss and damages. Not to mention the personal suffering I was put through.