

Right On! #22



*Newsletter of the New Afrikan Black
Panther Party - Prison Chapter*



WHAT WILL IT TAKE?

The world is such that exploiters cannot live without a mass of people to exploit and oppress, but the people can live quite well without exploiters. Thus the centuries old class struggle has a resolution – the elimination of class-based society and exploitation. Not everybody thinks this is a good solution. Those who figure they are benefiting from the exploitation of others – of the masses as a whole – won't jump at the chance to see social justice created.

The oppression of the Black masses in Amerika is part of the class oppression in this society. From the beginning, Black people were brought here as a commodity to be sold and employed to generate profit for their owners. FREEDOM has been the dream, the elusive prize, generation after generation has struggled towards. But so far emancipation has just been an exchange of one type of slavery for another: from bondage to a master to bondage to the land, to bondage to a wage, ending up in prison – a slave of the state.

In white-created Amerika being black is being marked-down, worth-less, paid-less. It's an oppression added on to class oppression. Capitalism loves a bargain and is always looking to save or make a buck. The oppression of Black people down-presses all working class people. That's the idea. Racism divides the working class and generates super-profits for the rich class of exploiters. It is built-in to capitalism, and to end one we have to end the other. This is in the true class interests of all working people – indeed, of humanity as a whole. As Blacks must end capitalism to attain liberation, it is

necessary for the Nation of New Afrikans in Amerika to play a vanguard role in the proletarian socialist revolution.

Since we cannot make revolution here without bringing down the world capitalist-imperialist system, New Afrikans must play a vanguard role in building a worldwide United Front Against Capitalist-Imperialism to unite all the oppressed people, communities and nations against our common enemy. The next round of the World Proletarian Socialist Revolution calls for greater unity and internationalist consciousness.

We must build unity between communities and between the people in the imperialist countries and the people in the neo-colonially-dominated Third World countries. We must transform the oppressed communities into base areas of cultural, social and political revolution and strongholds of People's Power where our United Panther Movement is deeply-rooted among the masses of poor and oppressed people. We must create a situation of dual power.

We must defeat the ruling class's strategy of criminalization and mass incarceration of the poor by transforming the prisons into "Schools of Liberation" and building a powerful international movement to fight for prisoner's human and democratic civil rights in opposition to the Prison-Industrial Complex and the "New Slavery."

This is Our Strategy!

Panther Love!



Abu Ghraib Comes to Amerika: Torture Unit Under Construction at Virginia's Red Onion State Prison



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Minister of Defense, NABPP-PC

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Virginia Justifies a Torture Unit

This past summer, a Black prisoner was strangled to death on a segregation exercise yard at Virginia's remote Red Onion State Prison. A white prisoner is alleged to have committed the killing.¹ This incident caps a long history of Red Onion officials manipulating and facilitating racial conflict between prisoners.² But instead of exposing and addressing this fact, this tragedy is being used to justify the secretive construction of a torture unit at the prison.

Desire to operate such a unit has long been floated by Red Onion's warden, Tracy S. Ray, but it was not pursued until now because of lack of sufficient funds and plausible justification. With this recent death, however, Ray now has both his selling point and justification. The unit has been approved, funded, and is under construction in the prison's B-3 housing unit.

According to one lieutenant, enough money is being spent on the unit's construction "to build a whole new prison." A list of candidates for the unit has already been compiled. I've been told repeatedly that my name tops it. The list is almost entirely black and consists of prisoners who have distinguished themselves for resisting and speaking out against the notoriously abusive and racist conditions at Red Onion.

Although the unit's projected design and living conditions have been shrouded in secrecy to avoid outside scrutiny, leaks have come out to local attorneys who have relatives and contacts that work at Red Onion, and from minimum security "cadre" inmates who for pennies an hour have been working overtime for two months so far constructing the unit.

Assignments to B-3 will be punitive, brutal, indefinite and will inflict tortures designed for and used against "enemy combatants" at the Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib detention centers. Ranking Red Onion officials admit its actual purpose will be to apply, study, and advance methods of those with dissident, oppositional, or otherwise "unacceptable" attitudes. When U.S. intelligence agencies began experiments of torture after World War II,³ allegedly

for use against dangerous foreign enemies, they cited the same purposes. The implications are ominous.

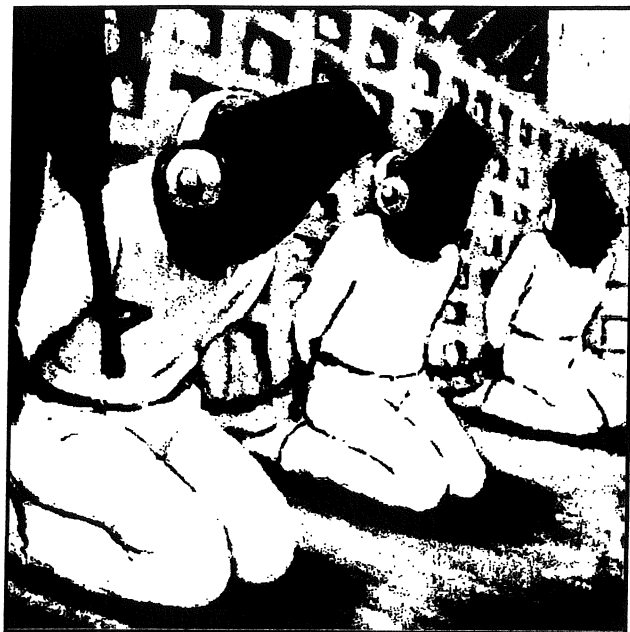
Advanced Modern Torture -- Amerikan Style

In a 2007 article,⁴ I showed a general parallel between the torturous inhuman conditions of modern U.S. prisons and the advanced torture techniques (psychological warfare) developed and applied against foreign "enemies" by the CIA and U.S. military. Red Onion's torture unit now shows a clear and deliberate link between the two, and that what began as techniques developed for use against Amerika's "enemies" are now being directed at Amerikan citizens. This will inevitably spread.

The CIA/military's advanced torture methods were exposed in Professor Alfred McCoy's detailed and thoroughly documented 2006 exposé.⁵ His book traced the CIA's efforts to develop and perfect new and less physically evident torture methods over 50 years, which included a research project (from 1950 to 1962) that cost over 1 billion a year that sought to "crack the code of human consciousness." The agency tried everything from drugs (including truth serum, mescaline and LSD) to shock treatment. None of these efforts produced desired results.

Alongside these more invasive methods, the CIA also funded behavioral studies at top universities like Yale, Princeton, Harvard and McGill. These efforts bore fruit beginning at McGill.

McGill's Dr. Donald O. Hess discovered that he could consistently produce hallucinations and psychotic breakdowns in a person within 46 hours, by cutting them off from environmental stimulation. He did this by having student volunteers lie blindfolded with soundproof earmuffs and thick mitts on, inside a small cubicle for several days. Most of the students quit the experiment. He also acknowledged that confinement in solitary prison cells produce similar results only more gradually.⁶



This was the first breakthrough -- "sensory deprivation."

The CIA's second advance came from studies of "foreign" torture techniques at Cornell University Medical Center. One of the most effective methods discovered was "self-inflicted pain." This involved making the victim stand for one or two days which causes the body fluids drain into the legs which then swell causing boils that swell and burst, and hallucinations and kidney failure. The victim is told repeatedly during this process; "You're doing this to yourself. Cooperate and you can sit down."⁷

The CIA found that combining these two techniques produced revolutionary results while leaving little evidence of abuse. The Agency found its torture model and in 1963 encoded and distributed it worldwide in its torture handbook, the *Kubark Counterintelligence Manual*.

Under General Geoffrey Miller, in 2002, Guantanamo Bay was converted into a torture research lab where the CIA model was advanced even further, adding two key techniques. The two techniques developed at Guantanamo consist of attacks on cultural sensitivities such as Arab males sensitivity to gender issues and sexual identity, and targeting one's personal fears and vulnerabilities. By 2003 the CIA torture model was perfected at Guantanamo, combining this multi level attack on the human psyche namely 1. sensory deprivation 2. self-inflicted pain 3. cultural sensitivities and 4. personal fears and vulnerabilities.

Later in 2003 when resistance to the U.S. invasion of Iraq caught U.S. forces off guard, Miller was sent to Abu Ghraib from Guantanamo to implement his techniques against captured Iraqis. A CD and handbook of his methods were distributed to U.S. military police intelligence agents and to General Ricardo Sanchez. Sanchez, commander of U.S. forces in Iraq ordered that Miller's methods be incorporated into interrogations of Iraqis. It was these practices that came out in the 2004 torture scandals at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo.

Investigations exposed an entire unit at Guantanamo, housing Arab men who had been reduced under these techniques to the level of toddlers. They were found sitting on the floor, playing with toys, crying, soiling themselves etc.

As McCoy exposed, torture experts agree that psychological (or "clean") torture is far more dangerous, destructive and lasting than physical torture, and it is far more cruel. Victims often need extensive treatment to recover from injury far more crippling than mere physical pain. Perpetrators can suffer a dangerous expansion of ego, leading to escalating cruelty and lasting emotional disorders.

The B-3 Torture Unit

B-3 will be Red Onion's second torture unit, informally called "superseg" (segregation within segregation). The first superseg unit was constructed and opened in 2005 in Red Onions C-4 unit and distinguished itself for extensive physical abuse by guards with the complicity of medical staff. This abuse saw prisoners routinely beaten by guards while handcuffed behind their backs and legs shackled often resulting in broken teeth and bones, and dislocated joints. A Red Onion sergeant, Delmer Tate, was given charge of C-4 superseg. As a lieutenant now, Tate is to run the new B-3 superseg.⁸

I was among the first prisoners assigned to C-4 superseg. The conditions and brutality in C-4 were moderated following my compiling and circulating reports of the abuses to the outside and co-founding prisoner advocacy groups with concerned outside citizens like Fed Up! -- which generated public protests.

It is a noted pattern of officials to resort to less physically evident methods of abuse and torture following such exposures of physical torture. This is the purpose of the new B-3 superseg unit.⁹ Which is completely compatible with Warden Ray's overall agenda of protecting Red Onion's image, while maintaining its oppressive designs.

The cells in B-3 are being stripped of all furniture except for a heavily fortified steel bed-frame and steel toilet/sink combination. The cells' writing desks and property storage shelves are being removed.

The prisoners will have nowhere to sit and write nor to store their belongings (what little they may have). There will be no personal amenities in the cells such as televisions (which are allowed in all other units for religious, educational and very limited entertainment programs.)

All bedding (mattress, sheets, blankets, etc.) will be removed from the cells from 6 AM through 10 PM everyday, leaving the prisoner to stand or sit on cold bare steel and concrete surfaces for 16 hours. Throughout this time, the cell will be constantly illuminated with bright fluorescent lights that he cannot control nor dim.¹⁰ There is no view to the outside world within the cell, nor on the unit's outside exercise yard.¹¹

Outside exercises will be permitted three times a week for one hour. Which will consist of one standing idle inside a small dog cage, enclosed within a two story concrete structure that permits a view only of part of the sky from directly overhead. The only clothing permitted to protect against the freezing and sub freezing cold of winter are thin khaki pants and shirt, a light jacket and low top cloth deck



shoes, one pair of regular socks, tee-shirt and boxers. Only one layer of each clothing item may be worn and gloves and long-johns are not permitted.

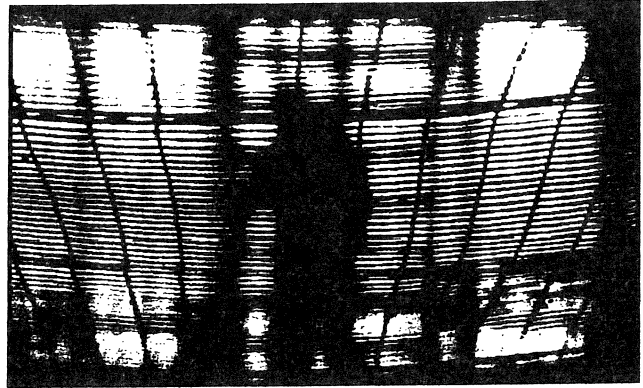
No clothing will be permitted inside the cells. Only a coarse loose fitting, sleeveless, dress-like garment called a "safety smock" may be worn. Cell temperatures especially surface temperatures, are constantly very low at Red Onion, leaving prisoners cold even when they have bedding and clothing. Many prisoners remain bundled up and wear winter skullcaps inside the cells year-round – even to bed.

The cells are constructed so that verbal communication is made difficult, and positioned so that prisoners cannot see each other. Each cell in B-3 will be internally equipped with video and audio monitoring equipment that will record all activities and statements of prisoners inside the cells, including confidential legal activities and discussions. Guards working the unit will wear mobile audio-video equipment that will also monitor and record prisoner contacts and conversations with them and in their presences. This extensive surveillance is admittedly to record and study prisoner's every action and statement, and their adjustments to the effects of B-3 on them. Prisoners at Guantanamo were subject to similar controlled studies, but not so thoroughly recorded in the military's torture experiments. The unit is clearly structured to inflict the multi-leveled assault on the human psyche developed and perfected by the CIA/military, and to permit extensive observation of its effects.

First *sensory deprivation* is blatant. There is a total loss of the stimulation of normal social environments and relationships, with the attendant stress and chilling effect of living under constant surveillance. This alone can produce extreme psychological pain and damage. There is otherwise little to nothing to do to occupy or stimulate the senses (visual, audio, olfactory, manual/muscular- skeletal).

This lack of environmental stimulation will both *create* an increased need for physical and social stimuli, while in turn denying both. The obvious result will be acute mental breakdowns as observed by Dr. Hess in his sensory deprivation experiments.¹² And this addresses only one component of torture, namely that of sensory deprivation. I haven't as yet discussed the suffering and effects of the other 3 components of the CIA/military torture paradigm which will also be applied in B-3 namely "self inflicted pain" and attacks on cultural sensitivities and personal vulnerabilities. The resultant 'behaviors' caused by this mental torture will then be cited as confirmation of the disruptive nature of B-3 internees and the "need" to remain and be in the unit. It's a self serving and self fulfilling process that is as predictable as breathing.

Second is self inflicted pain. I've had prior experience with lengthy confinement in cells with no clothing (except underwear) and no bedding during daytime hours. During 1998 at Virginia's Greensville Correctional Center, I was kept for seven months on an admittedly illegal status, called "white cell status," very similar to what's planned for B-3. The result of such conditions is to suffer constant physical pain and fatigue, and Red Onion officials are spreading the message early on that those chosen for B-3 will be due to their own behavior and attitudes, and only by changing them in the unit (I.E. cooperating with their captors), will they have any hope of being moved out of B-3.

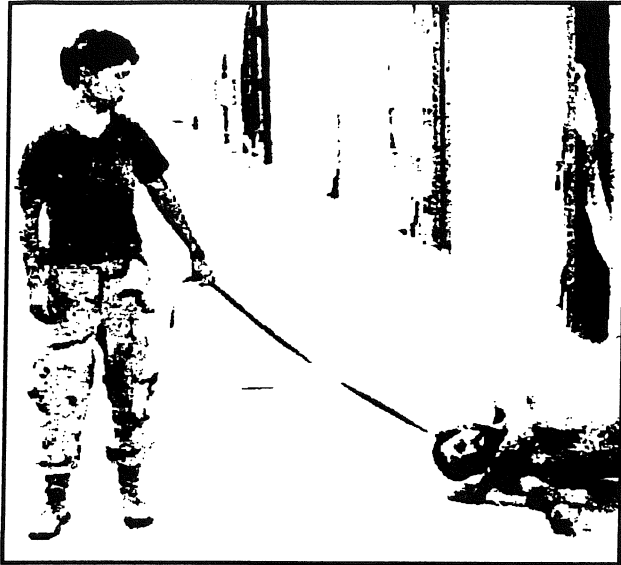


Being made to remain in a steel and concrete cell – without bedding and clothes – will compel one to stand at length on a bare, cold, concrete floor. Sitting on cold steel or concrete for substantial periods causes rheumatic pain deep in the joints, lower back and any body parts resting on or against these surfaces, also chronic hemorrhoids. Standing at length on these surfaces causes swelling and rheumatic pain in the legs, feet, knees, ankles etc. Much like the torture technique studied at Cornell Medical Center.¹³

The body becomes increasingly vulnerable and sensitive to this pain and suffering, and begins to deteriorate after weeks and months of constant exposure to these conditions. Arthritis develops in the joints, along with chronic musculo-skeletal aches and pain. Increasing atmospheric temperatures inside the cells offers no relief. Since it is virtually impossible to warm the concrete and steel surfaces within a prison cell, especially during spring, autumn and winter months when it is cool and cold outside. This is because the surfaces inside the cell are part of the same concrete structure outside the prison building that absorbs outside cold temperatures.

The Physical and mental pain of B-3 will come in many forms. All of which officials will insist is the fault of the prisoners, rather than that of Red Onion officials who are inflicting it.

Third is attacks on cultural sensitivities. A large cage is to be constructed in the middle of the unit, where prisoners brought from their cells will be strip searched. During these searches he must strip naked and manipulate his genitals and buttocks for scrutiny by male guards. This, and the attendant dress-like "safety smocks" worn inside the cells, is calculated to offend most prisoners, especially urban males sensitivity to gender issues.¹⁴ Being projected as feminine or sexually submissive especially before ones peers is highly offensive in male prison culture because such prisoners are deemed weak and are those targeted with routine domination, violence and rape. Anyone can recognize the cultural offense of living under constant audio, video surveillance. Especially having ones most private activities monitored, such as using the commode, bathing, and engaging in the natural act of masturbating – in an environment where normal sexual relations are denied (another component of sensory deprivation). These monitored activities will be subject to observation by female employees. There will be no medical, mental health nor legal privacy, as all contacts with such staff, attorney calls, etc, will be conducted under audio video monitoring. Then there is the cultural clash between prisoners and staff.¹⁵



Fourth, personal vulnerabilities will be targeted in many ways. For example, if one delays or refuses to relinquish his bedding at 6 AM, he will be met with immediate force by one or more teams of riot-armored guards, who will "cell extract" him by means of tear gassing him, rushing into the cell, electrocuting him with one or more 75,000 volt electricity weapons and forcefully restraining him. They will then take the bedding. In process of cell extraction the guards will invariably get in sly punches, knees, and kicks, grabs at the groin and throat, gouges at the eyes and bending fingers back; All the while yelling, "Stop resisting! Stop resisting!" for effect.

The cell-extracted prisoner will then be placed into in-cell (ambulatory) restraints for up to 48 hours. This will emphasize his vulnerability and powerlessness, and the futility of resisting or protesting being abused. At Red Onion violent force and cell extractions are the routine first resort to compelling prisoner's compliance with arbitrary demands, even when no force is needed.

In B-3 superseg, prisoners will be unable to flush their own commodes. Guards will flush them from outside the cells. With these few, and certainly not exhaustive, examples one can see clearly the continued torture B-3 will inflict on the units inhabitants. Another aspect of the torture in B-3 will be prisoners being confined to bright lighting 16 hours a day. This condition, which is general to Red Onion (except for minimum security cadre inmates who are able to control their in-cell lighting) has caused or contributed to prisoners' visual impairment at an unprecedented level at Red Onion.

Living under constant fluorescent lighting causes chronic eye strain, blurring and watering, and visual deterioration. Another factor that I believe contributes to this high rate of visual impairment is lack of visual stimulation in Red Onion's segregation, where no views are permitted to the outside which denies regular stimulation and exercise of long range vision and focusing – yet another factor of sensory deprivation.

The Lies that Justify Red Onion

Before and since Red Onion opened in 1998 – and its sister supermax, Wallen's Ridge, opened in 1999 – Virginia's

officials fed the public a steady stream of lies to justify the expensive construction and operation of these unnecessary facilities. Initially, it was claimed that these 2,400 supermax beds were needed to securely confine Virginia's multitudes of chronically violent and dangerous prisoners.¹⁶ Added to this was the claim that those housed in these prisons would never again see society due to their long sentences. Both of these rationales were soon exposed as lies.

In a critical 1999 investigative report, Human Rights Watch (HRW) found that before Red Onion even opened, the DOC had a review conducted of its prisoner population by James Austin, a nationally-recognized expert on prisoner classification systems. Austin's review found that Virginia had one of the nation's most docile prisoner populations; that "few engaged in institutional violence or escapes."¹⁷ But what HRW's report *did* find was a high level of violence and racist oppression inflicted on Red Onion's predominantly Black prisoner population by its nearly exclusively white staff.¹⁸ It also revealed that most of the prisoners were eligible for release, or otherwise did not meet the DOC's own criteria for supermax placement.

Officials repeatedly changed their own security level criteria to justify filling cells in their super-expensive supermax prisons. As HRW found out, Virginia officials kept, "adjusting supermax housing criteria not to reflect genuine security and management needs, but simply to fill what would otherwise be half-empty but very expensive facilities."¹⁹

With these exposures and attendant media criticism, Virginia officials transferred many prisoners away from the supermaxes, and intensified changes in their supermax classification criteria in efforts to qualify more prisoners for supermax housing. Still unable to create substantial numbers of justifiable supermax classifications, they began – at an unprecedented level – contracting to house out-of-state prisoners from Washington D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Wyoming, the Virgin Islands and other places.

The Virginia DOC secured many of these contracts by boasting of their "proven success rates" at controlling Virginia's own dangerous and violent prisoners. But they failed to mention that Virginia never really had many to begin with, that they'd been filling their supermaxes with non-violent offenders.

Immediately upon arrival the out-of-state prisoners began experiencing the same extreme brutality and racism the Virginia prisoners were subjected to, but unlike Virginia's prisoners, many of them had strong outside support and advocacy networks in their home states that immediately went to work for them – resulting in public protests and law suits which led to the withdrawal of these prisoners from Red Onion and Wallen's Ridge – starting with those from Connecticut,²⁰ New Mexico and the District of Columbia.

Under these protests, DOC Director Ronald Angelone resigned on May 9th, 2002 and a token Black warden, Daniel Braxton, was assigned to Red Onion as window dressing. As my 2004 exposé²¹ on abuse at Red Onion revealed, abuses continued. In fact, under Braxton, abuses and racism escalated at Red Onion, and the first superseg unit was opened in 2005 under his watch.



Despite losing their appeal for out-of-state contracts, and having lost all credible claims for operating even one – let alone two – supermax prisons, Virginia's officials were still determined to try and justify continuing to operate these expensive and unneeded prisons. So in 2005, they reduced Wallen's Ridge's security level from supermax to medium security. Subsequently, they cut Red Onion's prisoner population in half, creating unauthorized housing statuses like, "Progressive Housing," brought in scores of minimum security 'cadre' prisoners – ostensibly as 'workers' but in actuality to fill beds – and they were finally forced to remove Red Onion's supermax status as well. Red Onion was then classified as a "Segregation Prison," and the DOC officially terminated the 'Level 6' (supermax) classification altogether in February 2007.

Outside protests continued, much of it generated by my published reports of human rights abuses at Red Onion. In late 2004, Warden Braxton was replaced by Tracy S. Ray. Ray came on board with a specific agenda – to repair Red Onion's tarnished image – and to curb outside protest and negative media coverage. Ray emphasized using psychological coercion (especially behavioral conditioning) against prisoners as a control mechanism as opposed to overt violence. Although it persists in many form, physical abuse has been greatly reduced under Ray's watch, and a

more determined effort is made to cover-up violent incidents when they occur.

Ray and his appointed inquisitor, Tony Adams, actually took the time and bother to personally monitor my correspondence and communication with people on the outside, read my reports, articles, legal and personal mail, and institute "counterintelligence" measures to isolate me, cut-off my ties with the outside world, frustrate my communications, undermine my relationships, censor my writings and attack my character and credibility.²² Under their designs, I was also targeted with some sixteen counts of criminal indictments over a three year period.

These bogus charges were intended to intimidate me and consume my limited resources and time defending against these charges, as they knew I would not let an appointed attorney represent me. Representing myself, every one of these charges was dismissed.

They also devised to get rid of the prisoners' TVs that had radios built-in because a local radio station had a call-in program for prisoners at Red Onion and Wallen's Ridge. This gave the prisoners a voice to the outside that was winning local sympathy.²³

With all prior justifications for having built Red Onion and Wallen's Ridge discredited, DOC officials, with Ray and



Adams at the forefront, sought to validate Red Onion's use as a "Segregation Prison" by *manufacturing* a problem with gang activity and violence. Prior to 2004, Virginia's prisons had very few organized gang members nor any visible gang activity. None-the-less, they created "Gang Pods" at Red Onion and Wallen's Ridge, beginning in late 2004, where suspected rival gang members were forcibly housed together, with hopes of instigating violence between them. Red Onion had long used the practice of housing violent white supremacists with Black prisoners they disliked.

Red Onion's all-white and rural staff has no genuine experience with the culture of poor urban people of color.²⁴ The result is they aggressively slap gang profiles on Black and Brown prisoners for no more than an urban style of speech or taste in music. Most of those tagged with gang profiles adamantly deny that they have any gang affiliation.

Many have been forced to join gangs because of the false gang profiles made by the prison officials leading to conflicts with actual members. Adams, whom Ray promoted from working in the dog kennel to the position of investigator, suddenly proclaimed himself an expert on gang culture. He has been the central figure in the "witch hunt" and in stirring up both racial and gang animosities and conflicts among the prisoners at Red Onion. Adams and his colleagues have not only orchestrated or tried to provoke violent conflicts by deliberately housing "documented" rivals in cells and units together and operating gang pads, but they profile and publicize prisoners as gang members upon the flimsiest evidence and often out of spite. Adams also classifies and thereupon represses information related to Black civil rights groups and leaders as 'gangs' and 'gang related.'

The recent prisoner death at Red Onion occurred under these circumstances. Indeed it should be placed squarely on Adams' shoulders, where the prisoner accused of the killing is a self-admitted member of a white gang, while the Black prisoner who was killed was a "documented" member of a Black street gang. Yet they were housed by Adams in the same unit together, facilitating the fatality.

However, instead of addressing the problem at the root -- namely Red Onion officials inciting and facilitating gang violence between prisoners -- this tragedy is being used by them to justify Red Onion's continued existence, and their constructing a torture unit which will in no way resolve the basis of what occurred.

Lies and evasions are typical features of DOC public relations. And have been the bases of the justifications given over the years for the expensive construction and continued operations of Red Onion and Wallen's Ridge, the real purposes of which have been to create and sustain a lucrative investment climate for various wealthy corporate interests, and to revitalize the local economy in impoverished rural southwestern Virginia; with urban Blacks and Browns made the victims of the abusive conditions within these prisons. This is why every justification for their existence has been discredited in turn, only to be opportunistically replaced by yet another manufactured one, while attempts to expose and redress abuses and the brutal conditions in the prisons are met with the same lies, evasions, and cover ups.

Red Onion, a fief unto itself

Under Virginia laws, the Virginia Board of Corrections (BOC) is the DOC's chief oversight authority. It sets out standards and goals which the DOC is to apply, and the board is to monitor the DOC to ensure its compliance.²⁵ Red Onion, however, has always operated completely outside and free of the oversight of the BOC or any other authority. The conditions and status implemented at B-3 are but one example of this.

Under BOC's written standards, there exists only 3 special housing "statuses" namely general detention, isolation, and segregation.²⁶ There is no authority for the creation or existence of any other special housing statuses. Only on isolation, a designated, temporary punitive status imposed only for rules violations, may a prisoner's bedding be removed during daylight hours.²⁷ Prisoners are to be at all times able to flush their own commodes. They are to have enclosable storage space inside the cell.²⁸ Cells are to have natural lighting.²⁹

Red Onion officials have created the unauthorized two-phase progressive housing status to create a basis for keeping prisoners at Red Onion who do not actually qualify for continued segregation confinement and to forestall having to transfer those qualified for housing at lower security prisons. Actually 'progressive housing' embodies the conditions and privileges that prisoners are supposed to enjoy on segregation status. As HRW found over a decade ago, segregation status at Red Onion is actually punitive and extremely harsh. Indeed its conditions impose sensory deprivation.³⁰

The BOC which conducts public meeting monthly in Richmond, Virginia, is responsible for and empowered to conduct hearings and summon witnesses, in exercising and enforcing it's monitoring and oversight duties within the DOC. Despite the obvious deviations of Red Onion from BOC standards, and over a decade of incessant abuse and racism, this DOC prison has yet to be the subject of such investigative hearings and oversight.

In essence, Red Onion operates as a fief unto itself, with those who are required by law to monitor its operations and ensure it's compliance with the law, refusing to do so. The prison is operated by a closed system of blood relatives and friends. Nepotism and cronyism run rampant. There are so many Mullinses and Flemings in the prison, one can't count them all. From the Major to Captains, Lieutenants, sergeants and corporal guards, to administrative staff, the Mullinses and Flemings pervade the prison. Then on both alternate shifts, two McCoy brothers are in charge of security. The prison staff is a closed society of families, friends and lovers all of whom come from local racially-segregated white communities, where racism is a general feature of local culture. There is but one Black male guard at the whole prison, and he admittedly keeps his distance from the others.

Blacks who have visited loved ones at the prison and who have stayed at local hotels, used local restaurants and shopped at local stores, unanimously comment on the open hostility and unwelcome attitudes they've experienced from local whites.³¹ These are the people who run Red Onion.



It is no surprise that a black prisoner died at the hands of a white one under supervision of Red Onion staff. What is surprising is it took so long to happen.

The secrecy, lack of oversight, and corruption that pervade Red Onion is nothing new. Actually, it is but a continuation of DOC practices found by the courts almost 40 years ago. One Virginia federal court found in a landmark case, Virginia prison officials refuse to recognize:

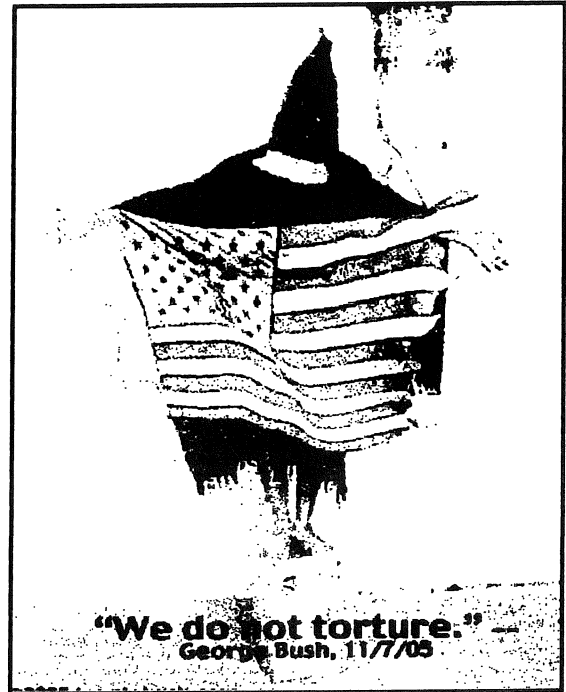
"...that a prison administration is not a fief unto itself. Coupled with this antiquated notion that a prison unit is not even peripherally a part of the community is the practice over the years that has been shown to the court in this and other prison cases, to envelop the system with a massive veil of secrecy. More concern seems to have been given to the image of the prison's administration than to granting to it's inmates not only such constitutional rights as they are entitled to in spite of their incarceration, but also the basic tenets of conduct which simple fairness, interpreted by even the most uneducated be accorded them as well. These cases are permeated by an apparent lack of understanding on the part of some of the (prison administration) defendants as well as on the part of at least some of their subordinates that the retribution required by law to be inflicted upon a convict has already within the limits of the legislatively set boundaries, been pronounced by a trial court."³²

In 2006, the commission on safety and abuse in America's prisons issued a detailed report which exposed the conditions of abuse, mismanagement, suffering pervading U.S. prisons.³³ Members of the commission consisted of attorneys, former judges, psychiatrists, former wardens, former mayors, etc.

Among the commissions findings were that extended segregated confinement, such as exists at Red Onion in general -- (which is now an explicitly long term segregation prison) -- amount to mental torture and inflict both physical and psychological damage. As this article emphasizes, these conditions will be greatly intensified in B-3 superseg. With the exception of overcrowding, all the abusive conditions found by the commission in prisons across the country exist with especial intensity at Red Onion, including the tendency toward secrecy.

In the report's conclusion the commission strongly recommended public oversight of U.S. prisons, which is what I have advocated and actively pursued over the years here at Red Onion. But my efforts have been persecuted and censored, and I villainized and repressed by Red Onion officials. This is clearly because they have much to hide. Anyone secure in their power does not fear exposure or criticism.³⁴

After World War II, Germans who lived in communities near Nazi concentration camps were taken on tours of them. Many were shocked and appalled to discover the brutalities and tortures that were taking place in their own backyard, and swore they would have opposed it if only they had known. This is what Red Onion officials fear -- exposure. Their experience with protest on behalf of prisoners from other states taught them that public opinion matters -- a lot. Exposure is even more important in this case where



advanced methods of torture are now being consciously directed at U.S. citizens. It's not going to end with Red Onion. Nor just with prisoners. And its not intended to -- which is why such extensive and expensive measures are being taken at Red Onion to monitor and record the effects of the B-3 torture unit on its victims.

As Professor McCoy observed:

"Torture is an extraordinarily dangerous thing. It taps into the deepest recesses of human consciousness, where creation and destruction coexist, where the infinite human capacity for kindness and the infinite human capacity for cruelty coexist, and it has a powerful perverse appeal. Once it starts, and both the perpetrators and the powerful who command them let it spread, it sprouts out of control."

"I think when the Bush administration gave those orders for techniques tantamount to torture at the start of the War on Terror, I think it was probably their intention that these be limited to top Al Qaeda suspects. But within months, U.S. personnel were torturing hundreds of Afghanis at Bagram near Kabul, and a few months later, in 2003, through these techniques soldiers were torturing literally thousands of Iraqis. And you can see in those photos how it starts, it becomes this Dante-esque Hell, this kind of play palace of the worst recesses of the human consciousness. That's why it is necessary to maintain an absolute prohibition on torture. There is no such thing as a little bit of torture. The whole myth of scientific surgical torture, which is academic torture advocates in this country came up with, that's impossible. That cannot operate. It will inevitably spread."³⁵

And it's already started. From Abu Ghraib to Red Onion.

All Power to the People!

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson



NOTES

¹ The killing is alleged to have been committed by a white prisoner who is a member of a white-exclusivist gang. Many Red Onion prisoners believe the murder to have been racially motivated and facilitated by guards.

² On numerous occasions I have documented, in the words of the white prisoners themselves, how Red Onion officials often use racist white inmates to antagonize and assault Black prisoners, especially by allowing them to carry weapons and bags of fermented feces onto the segregation exercise yards, to attack Blacks confined in locked, fenced-in cages. See, e.g. the sworn affidavit of Troy Ester which is on record at the Wise County Circuit Court, filed as Exhibit B in support of a motion to transfer venue, filed on January 22, 2009 in case styled *Commonwealth of Virginia v. Kevin Johnson*, Case No. CR08F00688-00. In his affidavit Estep candidly admits dislike of Blacks and having developed this attitude from growing up in southwestern Virginia, "where anti-Black racism is just part of the culture and how everyone is generally raised..." He reveals knowing many of the staff at Red Onion from society, having grown up and gone to school with many of them and states, "most of the guards and nurses and other whites who work as ROSP and WRSP feel the same as I do towards Blacks. Some are not in the open about it, like me, but most conceal it when around Blacks or others whom they feel will not comfortably accept this attitude." He went on to describe how guards at Red Onion deliberately manipulate racial violence between prisoners. In his own words he described how in segregation guards punish prisoners for throwing substances on them but do not punish them for doing it to each other. He states how guards who search him before going to exercise allow him to carry bags of feces to throw on Blacks, and how he'd "been documented over 20 times as having thrown feces at on Black inmates in segregation," but was never punished. He went on to admit Red Onion officials put him in the cell next to me with intentions of provoking and facilitating him throwing feces on me.

Not coincidentally, the same white prisoner who is accused of the recent killing at Red Onion was put in the cell next to me, and we went out to exercise numerous times together, during April 2010. Guards remarked repeatedly that they expected him to "kill another gang leader." He and I both felt the guards were attempting to instigate a conflict between us and he gave me his permission to expose this.

³ As I pointed out in a prior article, see note 4, below:

"After World War II, western governments established an aversion to physical torture, which they embodied in the character and treaties of their newly-established United Nations. This was brought on by the embarrassment and guilt of the Allied western nations who had stood by passively while the German Nazis tortured and conducted gruesome experiments on Jews and other Germans (disabled people, dissidents) as well as Slavs, Poles, and Gypsies. On account of this, the newly-established CIA became very interested in developing less physically evident methods of mentally breaking and brainwashing enemies."

⁴ Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, *Amerikan Prisons are Government Sponsored Torture, Socialism & Democracy*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (March 2007).

⁵ Alfred W. McCoy, *A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation, From the Cold War to the War on Terror*, (New York, Henry Holt, 2006)

⁶ As CIA researcher Dr. Albert Biderman discovered "The effect of isolation on the brain function of the prisoner is much like that which occurs if he is beaten, starved or deprived of sleep." *Op. cite* note 4. As I stated in my previous article:

"The Amerikan reformers who first devised the penitentiary believed that criminals could be 'reformed' through solitary confinement, labor and religious indoctrination. The use of solitary confinement and isolation – sensory deprivation – began at Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary in the 1820s. But what was actually discovered was that conditions of sensory deprivation caused mental deterioration and psychosis. Leading writers like Charles Dickens and Charles Darwin, upon touring the penitentiary, spoke out against its conditions of mental torture. As Dickens observed; 'I hold this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body.' The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately ruled such solitary confinement 'mentally destructive' and outlawed it...."

"It stated, 'A considerable number of prisoners fell, after even a short confinement, into a semi-fatuous condition, from which it was next to impossible to remove them, and others became violently insane; others still committed suicide, while those who stood the ordeal better were generally not reformed, and in most cases did not recover sufficient mental activity to be of subsequent service to the community.' *In Re Medley*, 134 U.S. 160, 168 (1890)..."

"Many modern courts have found the same conditions and injuries to prisoners from confinement in modern control units as did the high court of 1890 in the *Medley* case ... see, e.g. *Madrid v. Gomez*, 889 F. supp. 1146 (1995): '[M]any, if not most, inmates in SHU [Special Housing Unit] experience some degree of psychological trauma in relation to their extreme social isolation and the severely restricted environmental stimulation in SHU.' This court concluded that confinement under such conditions 'may press the outer bounds of what humans can psychologically tolerate The psychological consequences of living in these units for long periods of time are predictably destructive, and the potential for these psychological stressors to precipitate various forms of psychopathology is clear cut.' Another court found that 'isolating human beings from other human beings year after year or even month after month can cause substantial psychological damage, even if the isolation is not total. *Davenport v. DeRobertis*, 844 F. 2d 1310, 1316 (1989)."

⁷ "Self-inflicted pain" may be applied in a variety of ways, e.g. compelling one to stand at length, kneel or sit on hard surfaces at length, remain in cramped and painful positions, etc. These are called "stress positions." The key is that the body is used as a weapon against itself, without an external device, thus giving the impression that the victim is causing his/her own suffering. As the 1983 Honduran torture manual, modeled after the CIA's 1963 torture handbook, teaches, "pain which he [the subject] feels he is inflicting upon himself is more likely to sap his resistance." *op. cite* note 5, p. 136.

⁸ Tate has distinguished himself at Red Onion for abuse of prisoners, and he is generally disliked. His role in the abuses in the C-4 superseg unit was discussed in my October 2004 exposé of abuse at the prison, entitled: *Racism and Brutality: Equal, Kind and Usual Punishment in Virginia*, published as an article on the internet by Fed Up! in 2005:

"Kevin (Rashid) Johnson sent his exposé... to Governor Mark Warner on 31 October, 2004. The Governor routed the document to Sgt. D. Tate at ROSP. According to Johnson, Sgt. Tate is 'both the ROSP investigator and a supervisor in the superseg unit – he has himself been involved in various prior abuses of prisoners, myself included....' In fact, Tate is named frequently in Johnson's exposé." *Abuse and Torture of Prisoners Continues at Red Onion State Prison in Pound, Virginia*. <http://www.thomasmeritoncenter.org/fedup/first%20press%20release.htm>

According to ranking officials, as with the first superseg unit opened in the C-4 unit of Red Onion, guards selected for work in the new B-



3 unit will be chosen based upon their history of antagonism towards prisoners. One such guard, J. Hall, is a known abusive guard notoriously disliked by the prisoners. He developed special notoriety for his having brutally beaten a fully restrained prisoner, L. Nathan #251933, and knocked one of his front teeth out. Nathan had to have the other front tooth pulled also as a result of damage caused by the assault. The attack occurred on June 12, 2008.

⁹ "Clean torture is not simply a psychological tool, just because it does not leave marks. The history of modern torture tells us one more important point: whenever we watch, tortures become sneaky. When the news media, the public, or politicians monitor what police are doing during interrogations, the interrogators literally pull their punches.

"That makes clean techniques valuable: Allegations of torture are simply less credible when there is nothing to show. In the absence of visible wounds or photographs of actual torture, who is one to believe? Clean torture breaks down the ability to communicate between the victim and the wider community. Stealth tortures are unlike other tortures because they are calculated to subvert that relationship. And frankly, people judge more by what they see than by what they only hear about. Would Americans have been so outraged by Abu Ghraib without the pictures? In fact, the army released information to the news media and the public about the abuses before the famous pictures became available, but the public barely took notice." Darius Rejali, A Painful History: Why Have Modern Democracies Been such Important Innovators of Torture?

¹⁰ Compelling one to live under constant bright illumination is both torture and illegal in U.S. prisons. As the federal courts have stated, "there is no legitimate penological justification for requiring inmates to suffer physical and psychological harm by living in constant illumination. This practice is unconstitutional." Keenan v. Hall, 83 F 3d 1083, 1090 (1996).

¹¹ On the exercise yards prisoners will be unable to see each other.

¹² As a study of sensory deprivation by a team of 4 psychiatrists at Harvard conducted for the CIA revealed:

1. The deprivation of sensory stimuli induces stress;
2. the stress becomes unbearable for most subjects;
3. the subject has a growing need for physical and social stimuli; and
4. some subjects progressively lose touch with reality, focus inwardly, and produce delusions, hallucinations, and other psychological effects.

Op cite. A. 5, p. 40.

¹³ B-3 will inflict environmentally-induced "stress positions," namely the inability to sit or lie comfortably during the day will compel standing or sitting painfully for extended periods inside the cells.

¹⁴ Psychosexual humiliation accompanied by prolonged isolation has been found to inflict "devastating force" on those subjected to it as a form of torture. Op cite. A. S. P. 84. It was discovered in October 2003, that that prisoners at Abu Ghraib were being subjected to confinement in empty concrete cells, naked with no visual stimuli, much like the projected conditions of B-3. The Red Cross medical staff found victims of this treatment suffered after only a few days "memory problems, verbal expression of difficulties, incoherent speech, acute anxiety reactions,... and suicidal tendencies." These practices were found to be "prohibited under International Humanitarian Law." Id. p. 141. Furthermore, under DOC policy, prisoners are to retain clothing in Special Housing at all times.

¹⁵ Virginia Board of Corrections' standards require that prisoner living areas contain a toilet that s/he can operate "without staff assistance 24 hours a day." See 6 VAC 15-110 (A).

¹⁶ "Little information was ever provided to the public to substantiate the projected existence of 2,400 chronically dangerous inmates in Virginia." Human Rights Watch, Red Onion State Prison: Super-Maximum Security Confinement in Virginia, (1999).

¹⁷ Op. cite n. 16. In a telephone conversation with HRW, Mr. Austin revealed, "Virginia does not have a prison population with high levels of assaultive behavior." Id. p. 14.

¹⁸ One prisoner was quoted as saying, "Inmate on inmate violence virtually does not exist [at Red Onion]. Inmate on guard violence virtually does not exist here. Guard on inmate violence is high." Op. cite. n. 16, p. 15.

¹⁹ Op. cite. n. 16, p. 11.

²⁰ See, e.g. Craig Timberg; "Connecticut Pulls Prisoners From Wallen's Ridge," Washington Post, July 25, 2001, at BO1.

²¹ Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, Red Onion State Prison an Exposé: Fascism and Brutality Equal, Kind and Usual Punishment in Virginia.

²² On April 8, 2009, at a hearing conducted in Wise County Circuit Court, (see case cited in note 2), above, Tony Adams admitted that he and Ray were actively involved in preventing me from writing and publishing articles because they felt them to be "one-sided."

²³ This radio program, Holler to the Hood, airs on Monday nights on WMMT out of Whitesburg, KY.

²⁴ Much of the prisoner abuse at Red Onion was found by HRW to stem from a "clash of cultures" between the prison's almost totally white and rural staff, who had no prior exposure to Blacks, and its predominantly urban Black and Brown prisoner population. This condition per se constitutes a pervasive and acute attack on many of the prisoners' cultural sensitivities. As HRW observed, "Correctional officers and other prison staff threaten inmates with abuse and subject them to racist remarks, derogatory language, and other demeaning and harassing conduct. Facility administrators and supervisory staff appear to condone such unprofessional conduct... The preponderance of inmates at Red Onion are black, and the staff is almost entirely white, drawn from the rural coal-mining area in which the prison is located. Many of the staff have family or community ties with each other. They have had little to no direct contact with blacks before beginning work at Red Onion.... [Many] officers are quick to use derogatory terms and slurs. quick to use force, quick to impose their authority unnecessarily and capriciously.... Tensions and misunderstandings perhaps inevitably arise from a clash of cultures in which both black prisoners and white staff hold misconceptions and believe in caricatures about the other. But in a well-run facility with appropriate staff selection, training and supervision, those tensions can be minimized and kept from escalating into provocation, confrontations and violence. Unfortunately, white and black inmates alike at Red Onion describe an atmosphere of pervasive and blatant racism." Op. site. n. 16., pp. 2, 16.

²⁵ See, Code of Virginia, Section 53.1-2 et. seq.

²⁶ See, 6VAC 15 – 31 – 140 Special Housing Assignments. Also, under DOC policy these are the only 'authorized' Special Housing statutes. See, DOC OP 861. 3. Contrary to the conditions of B-3 this policy requires that Special Housing units "provide living conditions that approximate those of the general offender population," "Clothing that is not degrading," "access to basic personal items for use in their cells," etc.



²⁷ See, 6VAC 15 – 31 – 140 (G) "In isolation cases only, the bedding may be removed during the daytime hours."

²⁸ See, 6VAC 15 – 31 – 110 (A).

²⁹ Op. cite, note 28.

³⁰ "Segregation is the *modern form of solitary confinement*. Segregated inmates are almost completely deprived of the commonplace incidents and routines of prison life. In theory, administrative segregation is not a punitive measure. In practice, it can only be described as punishing. The more than 200 segregated inmates at Red Onion live in conditions designed to impose long-term social isolation and restricted environmental stimulation. Their world is austere, cramped and claustrophobic. Security procedures imposed on all inmates in segregation exceed those reasonably necessary for safety. Their real purpose may be simply to intimidate and degrade. Prisoners' minimal physical requirements... are met, but little more. The facility offers nothing but bleak isolation to encourage or enable an inmate to return to general population or to enhance his ability to live peaceably once he has." Op. cite, n. 16, p. 9. In my 2007 article on prison torture, I described the acute mental deterioration I've observed in prisoners confined in segregation at Red Onion for substantial periods. "Most," I've noted, "suffer a distinct regression into paranoia, irrationality, grandiose and persecutory delusions, childish attention-seeking behavior, reduced impulse control, hyper-sexuality, reduced ability to concentrate or maintain organized thoughts, compulsive and irrational searches for stimulation, gratification... and etcetera." Op. cite, n. 4. What's worse is Red Onion offers no mental health treatment. See, Op. cite, n. 16 p. 11 and n. 4.

³¹ Many prisoners at Red Onion discourage their loved ones from visiting them because they do not wish to have them exposed to the racial hostility of locals.

³² Landman v. Royster, 354 F. supp. 1292, 1299 (E.D. Va. 1973).

³³ Confronting Confinement, (June 2006).

³⁴ The report quoted the U.S. Justice Department's inspector general, Glenn Fine's finding that, "There is tremendous pressure within an institution to keep quiet" about abuse. This is especially true of Red Onion, as HRW found when the DOC's director refused to let HRW tour Red Onion and interview staff, as other state and federal prison systems have. "The unwillingness to let Human Rights Watch tour Red Onion coupled with DOC's notorious reluctance to give the press access to the facility and its inmates, suggests the DOC is uncomfortable in letting the public acquire a fuller picture of operations there." Op. cite, n. 16 p. 3.

³⁵ Quoted from a February 17, 2006 interview of Alfred McCoy aired on the radio program *Democracy Now!*



International Letter Writing Campaign for Rashid

Toronto Anarchist Black Cross/Support Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

I strongly encourage visitors to this blog to read the following call to support Kevin Rashid Johnson, put out by comrades Kim and Than.

As somebody who (tries to!) correspond with Rashid - we're working on getting a book of his writings out this Fall - I can personally attest to the fact that his mail is indeed being tucked with. Just the other day I received two letters I had sent him returned to me by the prison with a note saying "no approval" and "unauthorized correspondence" & of course I'm not the only one, this is just one example of the ongoing interference, part of a policy aimed at keeping Rashid and other politically active prisoners isolated.

So please take the time to read the following, and to write a few letters in support of this comrade.

A letter writing campaign is being launched to lend support to Kevin Rashid Johnson. Rashid is incarcerated in Red Onion State Prison which is located in southwest Virginia. He is a member of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party - Prison Chapter. (To clarify, this group has nothing to do with the racist group, the New Black Panthers). He became political during his time at Red Onion. He is very outspoken and active organizer. Because of this, there has been virtually continual retaliation against him.

Housed at a supermax facility which entails being locked in a cell 23/7, more or less continual isolation, all inmates undergo trauma. But because of his revolutionary politics, Rashid is under exceptional pressure. He regularly has his mail withheld. Mail is a lifeline for these folks and to have it confiscated is psychologically damaging. He is denied food and medical attention. On occasions too numerous to count, he has been beaten and tortured by correction officers. He often is put in 5 point restraint. This entails strapping a naked prisoner to a bare steel frame bed with their hands and feet shackled...prisoners are left for days in this condition.

If inmates have no support on the outside these abuses go unchecked. Rashid has asked that some action be taken on his behalf. If you could please send a letter of support to Rashid and to Warden Tracy Ray informing him that you have heard of Rashid's situation and you demand he be given his mail. Receiving mail is a major concern for Rashid.

Virginia has a reputation as the worst state prison system in the nation. It is notorious for the abuses that occur. Supermax institutions are the absolute worst. In southwest VA we have Wallen's Ridge and Red Onion. Folks who used to work in the coal fields now have the prisons to work in. The restructuring of the coal industry killed their jobs and their area. Prisons were built on blown up mountains. Tensions between the economically deprived white rural prison employees and the mostly Black urban inmates runs very high. Racism is overt. These places are powder kegs.



Rashid and the other Panthers at these institutions believe it is the capitalist system which oppresses us all. They know the root of gangs was to unite communities to "police" themselves. With this in mind they educate fellow prisoners to come together and end gang related fighting. The system seeks to divide the prisoners so any show of unity is a great threat to them.

We can vouch for Rashid. He is a committed and honest person. You may send one letter of support or end up with a relationship of letter writing. Rashid is a consummate debater. Your support is urgently needed. I will point out that writing to a political prisoner, who is actively monitored by the FBI and assaulted on their behalf, will alert the "authorities" to your identity. You could use an alias or a PO Box. We use our names and address, but you have to ascertain your own comfort level.

Solidarity Always, Kim and Than Grove

Write to any or all of the following:

Kevin Rashid Johnson #1007485
Red Onion State Prison
P.O. Box 1900
Pound, VA 24279

Tracy S. Ray, Chief Warden
Red Onion State Prison
P.O. Box 970
Pound, VA 24279

Gene M. Johnson, Director
Virginia Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 26963
Richmond, VA 23261-6963

FUCK YEAH MARXISM-LENINISM

Who is Kevin 'Rashid' Johnson? →



Original Black Panthers studying Mao's "Little Red Book"

Reposted on [redguard](#):

For maximum effectiveness of the Counter-intelligence Program, and to prevent wasted effort, long range goals are. ..[to] prevent the rise of a "messiah" who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement." -- Excerpt from COINTELPRO document (1967-1971).

If one were to read the writings or gaze upon the art of prisoner and revolutionary Kevin 'Rashid' Johnson today, one would surely know the type of leader that the quote above is referring to. Throughout the '60s and '70s, the FBI's Counterintelligence Program, headed by J. Edgar Hoover, laid out a program to destroy the rise of revolutionary movement amongst the oppressed masses of American

society. Far from being a relic of the past, similar tactics are being used today to undermine the organizing efforts of today's New Afrikan Black Panther Party (a black or 'New Afrikan' revolutionary communist organization, not to be confused with the cultural nationalist so-called 'New Black Panther Party').

Rashid, the Party's Minister of Defense, is currently being held at Red Onion State Prison in Virginia in sub-human conditions. As in the past, the state and its repression 'correctional' arm, are doing everything in their power to cow the revolutionary spirit of Rashid and isolate him from his fellow prisoners. Some of the things that Rashid has to endure on a daily basis include the confiscation and monitoring of his mail and communication, 24hr close-range video surveillance, frequent cell searches where contraband materials are planted by guards, frequent



food poisoning, and having to eat and exercise separately from other prisoners.

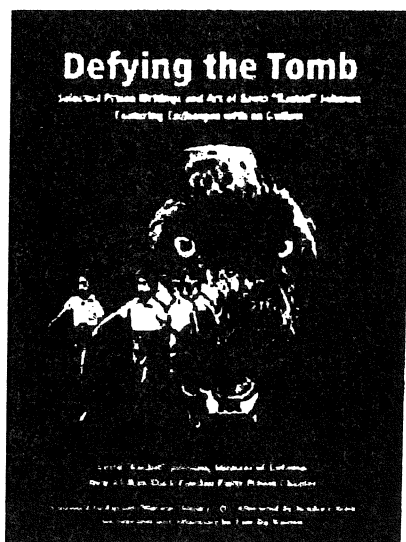
One might pose the question, why is Rashid receiving such attention from the state? Why are they targeting him and those associated with the party specifically? Because the New Afrikan Black Panther Party has managed to organize and raise the consciousness of black, white, brown, and indigenous prisoners and supporters on the outside through their struggle to unite America's most oppressed into an organized, revolutionary force. Just recently, one of Rashid's comrades at Red Onion State, Khaysi, was shot three times by a guard while in a prison yard, with a bullet grazing his skull and almost killing him.

The New Afrikan Black Panther Party is one of the first organizations to reemerge in the U.S., since the destruction of the Black Panther Party in the 1970s, that fully embraces the original program of the BPP and has clearly stated its intention to organize oppressed people for socialist revolution. Claiming the ideology of 'Pantherism,' which they indicate to be "illuminated by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism," it is not surprising that the state is so harshly targeting one of the Party's ideological leaders as prolific as Rashid. People on the outside have yet to come to the aid of Rashid, for the most part because Rashid is not yet familiar to many on the outside.

As Rashid has written, "Folks like Sundiata [Acoli], Mumia [Abu-Jamal], [Russell] Maroon [Shoats], etc...would never be left open like this by their supporters." We need to come together and do our best to expose the state's efforts to repress the resurgence of revolutionary organizing projects in the world's number one imperialist state, America. The revolutionary rising of the oppressed nationalities and working-class people in America would aid all people in the world fighting for national and social liberation.

By N. Zahra writing for *BASICS*. For more information about the NABPP, or to subscribe to their many journals, write to: Rising Sun Press, P.O. BOX 4362, Allentown, PA, 18105, U.S.A.

NOW AVAILABLE!



Defying the Tomb: Selected Prison Writings and Art of Kevin "Rashid" Johnson featuring exchanges with an Outlaw

Follow the author's odyssey from lumpen drug dealer to prisoner, to revolutionary New Afrikan, a teacher and mentor, one of a new generation rising of prison intellectuals. This book consists primarily of letters between Rashid and Outlaw, another revolutionary New Afrikan prisoner, smuggled between the segregation wing and general population over a period of months. These comrades educate themselves -- and us as well -- on Marxism and Maoism, the Five-Percenters, Dialectical Materialism, Dead Prez, Capitalism, Racism, Imperialism, Class Struggle, Revolutionary Nationalism, New Afrikan Independence, Psychology, and a host of other subjects, as they grapple with how to promote revolutionary consciousness in the most hostile of environments.

Rashid has been in prison for twenty years -- the past eighteen of which in segregation (solitary confinement). Shortly after this correspondence between himself and Outlaw, he and his comrade Shaka Sankofa Zulu founded the New Afrikan Black Panther Party-Prison Chapter. The NABPP-PC has since developed branches in various prisons across the u\$ empire and has its own newsletter, Right On!

A number of Rashid's essays written as Minister of Defense of the NABPP-PC are also included in this book. For more about Rashid, including links to his writings available online, please visit the Kersplebedeb website.

What the Comrades Say:

"Kevin 'Rashid' Johnson has put together an outstanding compendium of political essays and letters that addresses many of the critical issues of today. His intra-prison correspondences with his comrade, Outlaw, is a rewarding study in the determined and ingenious maneuvers that prisoners have to go through to politically educate and organize themselves -- and others around them. As a result, just reading the book itself provides one with the basic foundation of a political education."

-- from the Afterword by Sundiata Acoli, New Afrikan political prisoner of war

"Your mission (should you decide to accept it) is to buy multiple copies of this book, read it carefully, and then get it into the hands of as many prisoners as possible. I am aware of no prisoner-written book more important than this one, at least not since George Jackson's *Blood In My Eye*. Revolutionaries and those considering the path of progress will find Kevin "Rashid" Johnson's *Defying The Tomb* an important contribution to their political development."

-- Ed Mead, former political prisoner, George Jackson Brigade

"The correspondence of Rashid and Outlaw, carried on within the tenuous cracks of a supermax prison, offers the reader a compelling blend of psychological insight, political analysis, and passion for learning. Their defiance in the face of oppression is matched by their broad human solidarity. As they grapple with ideas, they also think as organizers, probing the dispositions and motivations of their fellow



prisoners. Their struggle for justice is informed by a commitment to reason."

-- Victor Wallis, Professor, Liberal Arts Department, Berklee College of Music

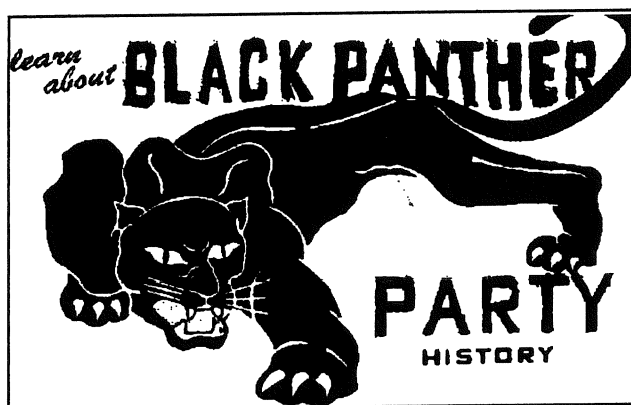
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Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter

Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter was a New Afrikan revolutionary and the founder of the LA chapter of the original Black Panther Party (BPP). In the early 1960s, "Bunchy" was a member of the first Black LA street gang, the "Slausons," and a member of the "Renagades," the leading inner circle of the Slausons. He was known then as the "Mayor of the Ghetto."

Convicted of armed robbery, Carter was imprisoned for four years in Soledad, where he became a Muslim and a follower of the teachings of Malcolm X. When he got out, Bunchy met Huey P. Newton, the founder and Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party. He joined the Party in 1967 and in 1968 formed the Southern California Chapter. It was an instant success, with 50 to 100 new members joining every week by April of 1968.

Some of the notable members were Geronimo Pratt, Erica and John Huggins, Angela Davis, and Elaine Brown. They began the Free Breakfast For Children Program and other Serve The People programs in the poor communities, patrolled the police, carried on political education, legal education, and weapons training for themselves and community members.

The Panthers were targeted by the FBI and its COINTELPRO program of infiltration, repression and assassination. The FBI and LAPD worked together and individually to eliminate what J. Edgar Hoover called the greatest threat to U.S. national security.



Bunchy Carter

In 1968 and 69, numerous false arrests and warrantless searches were carried out against Party members and supporters and several members were killed by police. The "Breakfast for Children was effectively shut down because of repeated arrests of Party members (most often the charges were dropped within a week.) "The Breakfast For Children program," Hoover wrote in an internal FBI memo in 1968, "represents the best and most influential activity going for the BPP and, as such, is potentially the greatest threat to efforts by authorities to neutralize the BPP and destroy what it stands for." Later that year, Hoover ordered his field agents to "exploit all avenues of creating dissension within the ranks of the BPP," and "submit imaginative and hard hitting counterintelligence measures aimed at crippling the BPP."

The FBI COINTELPRO agents secured cooperation within the Black cultural nationalist organization the United Slaves or US led by Ron Karenga. These "Porkchop Nationalists" sought to take over the Black Student Union at UCLA. At a BSU meeting at Campbell Hall on the UCLA campus, on January 17th 1968, an altercation between Panthers and US members led to the shooting deaths of Deputy Minister of Defense Bunchy Carter and Chapter Chairman John Huggins. Later during the Church



Committee hearings in 1975 evidence came to light that FBI agents had deliberately fanned the flames by sending death threats and humiliating cartoons created by the FBI to each group. Making it appear they had been sent by the other group with the explicit intention of provoking deadly violence.

The alleged shooter, Claude Hubert, was never found. But brothers George and Larry Steiner and Donald Hawkins were convicted of conspiracy and second degree murder. The Steiners escaped from San Quentin in 1974. George is still at large, and Larry lived as a fugitive for 20 years and then surrendered in 1994. He was immediately returned to San Quentin where he continues to serve out his life sentence.

The LAPD responded to the attack by raiding an apartment used by the Black Panthers and arresting 75 members, including all the remaining leadership, on charges of conspiring to murder US members in retaliation. Later, in 1969, two other Black Panthers were killed and one wounded by US members. The intensity of the police repression in LA literally drove the Party underground.

Bunchy remains a legendary figure, particularly to gang youth, and an example of revolutionary self-transformation. Like Comrade George Jackson, he is a role model for today's generation of revolutionary prisoners.



Lil' Bobby Hutton

Seize the Time/Bunchy Carter and Bobby Hutton

By Bobby Seale

Bobby Hutton was the first member of our Party murdered by the police, and Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were among the latest. Between those murders there was a long line of black brothers gunned down by racist cops and black racist, cultural nationalists working with the power structure against the revolutionary program of the Black Panther Party.

Bobby Hutton loved Bunchy Carter. Bobby Hutton used to develop alter ego relationships with different Party leaders - Huey, Eldridge, myself, and Bunchy. His latest, at the time he was killed, was imitating Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter. He tried to become more politically educated like Bunchy was and he really dug brother Bunchy, because Bunchy had been in prison. It wasn't a boasting, kind of absurd, "I did this much time," and "I did that much time," thing that Bobby related to. Bobby related to Bunchy because Bunchy was the brother who had come from prison and was back in the community, working to serve the people.

Bunchy also had an air about him that was stylish in the manner and the environment of the black community that Little Bobby readily communicated with. This manner is in the poetry that Bunchy would write and recite, and also in the sharp way that Bunchy dressed - the clothes of the people. We all have some sharp clothes, but Bunchy was always sharp - clean, with a sharp suit, pimp socks, and shined knobs. Little Bobby would see Bunchy with a big natural, that was kept very neat, a big moustache, a sharp suit and some clean clothes on, and he really dug the way Bunchy looked.

At the same time, Bunchy wasn't a selfish person. Deep down inside he really loved his people and he loved them so much that when he saw them doing something wrong, he would cuss the brothers out to try to get them to understand the need to survive, to unify, to defend ourselves, and to be revolutionaries and work in the community to serve the people.

This is the thing that surprised Bobby. Little Bobby was only sixteen years old, and he wanted to be sharp. Living in poverty and seeing brother Bunchy somehow stay sharp, and at the same time be a service to his community, kind of showed Bobby that he didn't have to get out of the Party. He didn't have to say, "Well, I'm gonna give up the Party just to get me some sharp clothes," as some brothers would, out of selfishness. Bunchy had arranged it so that on his parole he was receiving a fair sum of money working at a poverty program as some kind of assistant director. That's how he kept himself sharp.

When one would first see Bunchy, one might think that Bunchy was a pimp or some kind of hustler off the block, but he wasn't. Not that he didn't know the pimps and hustlers; Bunchy was very well respected and well known throughout Watts and the black community in Los Angeles by many, many people. When he was murdered, the Party had to go down and try to talk to some of the brothers, because there were some five or six hundred brothers throughout Watts that put shotguns in their cars and were looking for anything that looked like a member of Ron Karenga's US organization that had murdered him. We tried to tell the brothers that we didn't want a jive war in the



black community among black people, but at the same time we wanted to see to it that those cats who did the killing were prosecuted.

We felt that if the power structure didn't prosecute them, or if they used some kind of trick to let them go after prosecution, in the long run this would prove to the people that the US organization, black racism, and cultural nationalism were ultimately the tools of the power structure, and that they stagnated the people's revolutionary struggle for needed change in the community.

One of the cleanest things about Bunchy was his deep seriousness and honesty about the need for revolutionary change. When Eldridge, I, or someone from Central Headquarters would give him an order to stop doing something, he would stop. If he thought he was right, he would come and sit down and argue with us, not in an antagonistic manner but in a manner that showed that he wanted us to show him where he was wrong, because he still felt that it should be done. But he would stop if ordered to. Bunchy also respected organization, which is another thing that Little Bobby picked up from him.

Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter was killed because a group of blacks – black racists and cultural nationalists from Ron Karenga's US organization – became the enemies of the people and, in essence, sided with the capitalist power structure. These pig, black racists really work with the power structure against their own people, and do it out of psychological need to hate white people just because of the color of their skin.

Bunchy had been working in Los Angeles organizing the Black Panther Party throughout the city. In January of 1968, Bunchy had some arguments and small conflicts with the US organization. Bunchy was concerned about the fact that the US organization had been running around intimidating, threatening, and beating up a number of the people in the community, in the B.S.U. (Black Student Union), and other small factionalized black organizations. Bunchy and the Black Panther Party were not about to be intimidated by anybody. These other small groups asked Bunchy to stop Ron Karenga, and take over the Black Congress of Organizations that had been formed there and that Ron Karenga was in control of.

Bunchy called up and told us that he was going to go and corner Karenga and his boys and tell them they better stop their intimidation of those people. We told Bunchy to forget Ron Karenga because most organizations like his are bootlicking organizations, not representative of the community, and that, the people will choose the organization that serves them most. I told him on the phone, "What you should do is get out in the community, and forget Ron Karenga and the Black Congress too, and go and set up those community offices. You should have five, six, or seven offices set up down there, in all the different black community areas throughout Los Angeles. Work from there at serving the people and move to implement the Party's ten-point platform and program, and politically educate the masses of the people. That's what has to be done. Forget Ron Karenga."

Bunchy followed orders. He flew up on a plane a week later and wanted to argue his point, but Eldridge and I told him to forget Karenga and US. Bunchy felt that Karenga was going to cause some grave danger to the black community. Our

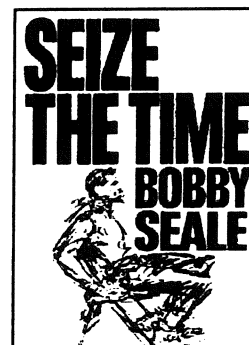
argument was that if he attacked the black community, the black community would attack him and remove him.

Some months after that John Huggins was made Deputy Minister of Information of the Southern California chapter of the Party, to replace this jackanape Earl Anthony who wasn't relating to the duties of that area of work. John and Bunchy worked very closely to pull the Party together in Los Angeles. The incident that led to their murder was part of this work.

The Black Student Union of UCLA had been having problems with US for a long time. A \$20,000-a-year job opened up, director of some kind of community and student program, and the US niggers wanted the job and wanted their puppet placed in control. The B.S.U. did not want them to control the program, and since the Black Panther Party had grown to be an integral part of the black community in Los Angeles, the Black Student Union asked Bunchy and John to come up to ~ meeting about it on the UCLA campus. The B.S.U. asked them what they thought about Karenga's attempts to control their group, and Bunchy and John just spoke for about five minutes. All they said at that meeting was that the students had a right to control their own destiny, and "Power to the Students!" Then they left. Two days later, on Friday, another meeting was called. John and Bunchy repeated the same five minute "Power to the Students" rap. That was the day they were killed, murdered right there in the meeting room by those racist, murderous pigs from US.

Of course Ron Karenga had no political power base with his cultural nationalism and black racism in Los Angeles. He runs around, and has a little jive office stuck up somewhere, but everybody is aware of his game and his capitalistic set of little jive businesses, mainly service stations. Those businesses are not cooperatives; they're not there to serve the people. From his past record and his meeting behind the scenes with the Rockefellers,² we know that he got those little jive businesses as a handout, to trick the community on the concept of blackness and black is beautiful. Ron Karenga had no intention before and has no intention now of working in opposition to the power structure to change the system for the needs of black America.

All the murders of Party members, Bunchy, Little Bobby, John Huggins, Fred Hampton, Mark Clark, Tommy Lewis, and the brothers who were gunned down prior to Bunchy, plus a host of other brothers who were shot up and killed by cops and racist cultural nationalists across the country, have not destroyed the Party. The arrests of our members have not destroyed the Party. We pay a tribute to these dead brothers of ours, and every Black Panther Party member and the people in the community honor them. We will fight against the racist pigs and the black racists who work together to try to destroy the Party.





The FBI's War on the Black Panther Party's Southern California Chapter

From: *It's About Time*, the Black Panther Party Alumni Website

Maoist Internationalist Movement <mim@mim.org>

MIM Theory #11

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The Black Panther Party (BPP) of the 1960s is remembered clearly by both its friends and its enemies. Both remember it as an organization that popularized the ideas of socialism and armed revolution in North America, particularly among Black people. Its friends also remember it for the challenges it posed to police brutality, hunger, disease, ignorance, and the oppression of Black people generally. (1) This article is not about these successes, however. Nor will it cover the



exact course of either the West Coast BPP's degeneration -- from its original revolutionary positions to its later reformist positions -- or the ultraleft turn of the East Coast BPP (which became the Black Liberation Army). Instead, after providing some background, it will focus on the state repression of the Southern California chapter of the BPP. The reader should remember that the repression that the BPP faced in Southern California was only a fraction of the repression the entire Party faced. (2) The fact is that the U.S. government engaged in deceit, sabotage, and murder to crush and silence its political opponents. This is crucial to understand, because it strikes at the heart of the U.S. government's myths about itself regarding free speech, human rights, liberty and justice.

The BPP's fall from its position as "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country" preceded its formal dissolution in the early 1980s. (3) It is perhaps impossible to pinpoint an exact moment at which the BPP abandoned its earlier positions, but clearly this degeneration took place. For instance, BPP founder and leader Huey Newton had once been clear in condemning liberal politicians:

"I don't believe that under the present system, under capitalism, that they will be able to solve these problems [of housing, unemployment, self-determination, justice, and imperialism]. I don't think Black people should be fooled by their come-ons, because everyone who gets in office promises the same thing. They promise full employment and decent housing; the Great Society, the New Frontier. All of these names, but no real benefits. B+ Black people are tired of being deceived and duped. The people must have full control of the means of production." (4)

But by November 1974, Jerry Brown was elected governor of California with the help of a BPP endorsement. (5) Newton's former comrade, Geronimo Pratt, languished in a California jail cell on false charges throughout Brown's tenure as governor. (6) Nonetheless, in 1976, the BPP, under Elaine Brown's acting leadership, supported Jerry Brown for President. (7) Whereas BPP Chairperson Bobby Seale had been brought to trial -- bound and gagged for his participation in the demonstrations against the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968, in 1976 -- Elaine Brown served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. (8) Former Panthers Kit Kim Holder and Safiya Bukhari suggest that the 1970-1971 split of the BPP into an Oakland faction under Newton's leadership and a New York faction under Eldridge Cleaver's initial leadership marked the degeneration of the BPP. Says Holder, "both factions began to overemphasize either the mass organizational or military aspect of the struggle." (9) While not the only factor, state repression was key in bringing about this destruction of the BPP.

Origins and Infiltrators

The Black Panther Party was formed in Oakland, Cal. in October 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, principally Huey Newton. Newton and his party had already made names for themselves by the time Newton was arrested on Oct. 28, 1967, for allegedly killing a police officer in self-defense. In response to this arrest, Earl Anthony of the BPP Central Committee moved to Los Angeles in November 1967 to raise support for the Huey P. Newton Legal Defense Fund. (10) This marked the start of Panther activity in

Southern California. It marked the start of covert anti-Panther activity in Southern California as well. By his account, Anthony had agreed four months prior to become "an FBI informant-agent-provocateur inside the Black Panther Party." (11)

Furthermore, 1967 was also when the FBI's Richard Wallace Held "was assigned to the Bureau's Los Angeles field office, as a specialist in 'black extremist' matters and head of the local Cointelpro section." (12) Cointelpro, FBI short for "counterintelligence program," was first launched in 1956 against the Communist Party, USA (CPUSA). The Cointelpro against Black nationalists began in 1967, with the BPP as its main target. (13) On Aug. 25, 1967, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover wrote an internal memorandum to all FBI offices which explained: "The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters." (14) Cointelpro first became publicly known on March 8, 1971, when a group called the Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI broke into the FBI's Media, Penn. office and removed thousands of pages of classified files. (15) Exposed, the state officially discontinued Cointelpro.

In reality, however, the code name changed, but the operations continued. (16) For instance, Richard Held became the special agent in charge of the San Francisco office, where he may have been responsible for operations against the radical environmentalist group Earth First!, including a failed assassination attempt on and subsequent arrest of two Earth First! activists on May 24, 1990. (17)

The Southern California chapter of the BPP was formed in 1968 by Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter. Carter was the former head of the 5,000-strong Slauson gang and its 'hardcore,' the Slauson Renegades, and was therefore known as "the Mayor of the Ghetto." While spending four years in Soledad prison for armed robbery, he became a Muslim and a follower of Malcolm X. In 1967, Carter met BPP Minister of Defense Huey Newton and became a Panther on the spot. Carter formed and headed the Southern California chapter, taking position of Deputy Minister of Defense, announced in early 1968. (18)





Among the best-known members of the Southern California chapter besides Carter were Elaine Brown, Raymond "Masai" Hewitt, Vietnam veteran Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, Ericka Huggins, Angela Davis, and Captain (later Chairperson) John Huggins. Huggins, who had served in Vietnam, became the number-two-ranking member of the chapter. Davis joined briefly before being recruited away by the CPUSA. (19) In accordance with party-wide requirements, chapter members were required to attend political education classes regularly, read certain books including Marx, Che, and Quotations from Chairman Mao (the "Red Book"), memorize and follow the rules of discipline, memorize the BPP program and platform, learn to use firearms (training was conducted in the Mojave Desert), and learn to perform emergency medical techniques.(20) By April 1968, the Southern California chapter gained 50-100 new members each week, though not all stayed.(21)

Attacks on the Party

As the chapter grew, so did the attacks against it. These initially took the form of random raids of party offices and homes and random arrests of Party members. On April 5, 1968, a day after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, San Diego police crashed down the door of Ken Denman, a Peace and Freedom Party leader and Panther organizer in San Diego -without a warrant.(22) On Aug. 5, 1968, police killed BPP Captains Little Tommy Lewis, Steve Bartholomew, and Robert Lawrence at Adams Boulevard and Montclair in Watts.(23) On Jan. 1, 1969, Captain Franco (Frank Diggs), the reputed leader of the BPP's local underground apparatus,

was shot dead in an alley in Long Beach. (24) In 1969, the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) vice squad was transformed into its "metro squad." The metro squad was the LAPD's Panther unit, an "urban counterinsurgency task force." (25) In April 1969, hundreds of Panthers were meeting on the second floor of the BPP's Southern California chapter's headquarters at 4115 S. Central Avenue in Los Angeles. Hundreds of LAPD officers from the Newton Street Division surrounded the building. The chapter's leader at the time, Geronimo Pratt, turned off the lights and armed and organized the Panthers to defend themselves. Panthers Joan Kelley and Elaine Brown contacted the news media, ultimately prompting the LAPD to withdraw. (26) On May 1, 1969, the LAPD raided the L.A. BPP office. Nine Panthers were arrested in the raid, and two other L.A. Panthers were arrested the same day. (27) During a two-week period around this time, the LAPD made 56 arrests of 42 Panthers. (28) On June 16, 1969, the San Diego Police Department raided the San Diego Panthers' office at 2608 Imperial Avenue. (29)

On Sept. 8, 1969, armed police raided the Watts breakfast program.(30) This raid accorded with an early 1969 FBI directive to "eradicate [the BPP's] serve the people programs." (31) On May 15, 1969, in an internal memo, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover wrote: "The Breakfast for Children Program represents the best and most influential activity going for the BPP and, as such, is potentially the greatest threat to efforts by authorities to neutralize the BPP and destroy what it stands for." (32) From September to December of 1969, Southern California's Panthers were arrested on a daily basis, with most of the charges dropped within a week. (33) On Oct. 10, 1969 the LAPD had a shoot-out with some Panthers. Panther Bruce Richards was wounded and charged with attempted murder, and Panther Walter Toure Poke was killed.(34) On October 18, the L.A. BPP office was raided yet again.(35) On November 22, the San Diego BPP office was raided. All seven Panthers present were arrested. (36)

Most dramatically, on December 8, the LAPD deployed its new SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics, a militarized police unit) teams, a warrant, a battering ram, helicopters, a tank, trucks, dynamite, and 400 police officers to raid three L.A. BPP facilities including the Central Ave. headquarters. (37) The raid bore much similarity to the raid against the Chicago BPP led four days prior by the FBI and Chicago police. (38) For instance, the government's plan called for the police to focus gunfire at chapter leader Geronimo Pratt's bed; however, Pratt was sleeping on the floor at the time.(39) But whereas the Chicago raid ended with Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark murdered, the L.A. Panthers, under Geronimo Pratt's leadership, stood their ground. Only after exchanging fire with the police for five hours did the Panthers surrender, alive. (40) Participant Melvin Cotton Smith, security officer for the L.A. branch, was later identified by former government agent Louis Tackwood as a police informant. (41) Louis Tackwood, too, was a government infiltrator of the Southern California BPP. (42) Cotton provided the LAPD and FBI with detailed blueprints of party facilities before the raid. (43) The LAP D's warrant was obtained on the basis of false information provided by the FBI regarding stolen military weapons. The day after the raid, Angela Davis and others set up a vigil outside BPP's Southern California headquarters, during which LAPD attacked, forcing people to flee in all directions. (44)



The attacks on the rank and file continued. On Nov. 4, 1970, the LAPD raided the L.A. BPP's child care center, rounded up children, and held guns on them while officers beat up an adult Panther. Police claimed to be responding to a landlord complaint of children in the building. (45)

The rank and file of the BPP were not the only targets of Cointelpro-BPP. Special attention was given to the leadership. In Southern California, the FBI success in "neutralizing" the BPP was largely attributable to its success in neutralizing two layers of local leadership: first Bunchy Carter and John Huggins, who were killed, then Geronimo Pratt, who remains in jail today on bogus charges.

Hoover's agenda

In late 1968, Hoover openly announced that the BPP was, in his opinion, "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country." (46) Cointelpro was massively expanded. In November 1968, Hoover ordered FBI offices "to exploit all avenues of creating dissension within the ranks of the BPP" and encouraged agents to "submit imaginative and hard-hitting counterintelligence measures aimed at crippling the BPP." (47)

In this context, the Los Angeles office of the FBI set the stage for the Jan. 17, 1969, "neutralization" by murder of the L.A. BPP's top two leaders, Bunchy Carter and John Huggins at UCLA's Campbell Hall. Because local Cointelpro head Richard W. Held took credit for the killings, there is no question that the FBI was responsible. Carter and Huggins' apparent killer was Claude "Chuchessa" Hubert, although George and Larry Stiner were arrested for the crime. All three were members of the cultural nationalist US organization led by Ron "Maulana" Karenga. It is unclear

whether Hubert, the Stiners, and Karenga were knowing agents of FBI-Cointelpro, accidental agents, or some combination of the two.

Congressional investigators of Cointelpro put forward the most conservative plausible argument. Huey Newton summed up this argument: "The impression given from official investigations is that the FBI merely took advantage of an existing state of 'gang warfare' between the two organizations. This was supposedly accomplished by the sending of false death threats and derogatory cartoons in the name of one organization to another." (48) It is true that local Cointelpro head Richard W. Held "devised and released a series of cartoons and forged in the names of the Panthers and a nationalist organization known as United Slaves (US), in which the rival groups appeared to be viciously and publicly ridiculing one another." (49) And there were genuine differences between the two groups. The Panthers were Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries, while US was cultural nationalist. (50) US was highly patriarchal, while the Los Angeles Panthers were anti-sexist (though it is true that other BPP chapters were more like US in this regard). (51) Concretely, the two organizations competed for recruits. This rivalry grew as the two organizations found themselves competing on the same turf -- UCLA.

In September 1968, Bunchy Carter, John Huggins, Geronimo Pratt and Elaine Brown all registered as students in UCLA's High Potential Program. (52) Huggins seized the opportunity to become a student organizer. (53) On Nov. 25, 1968, J. Edgar Hoover told 14 FBI field offices that "an aura of gang warfare with attendant threats of murder and reprisals" existed between the BPP and the US organization and said they should exploit the situation. (54)

**UCLA killings**

Around this time, US leader Ron Karenga had suggested Dr. Charles Thomas as head of a proposed Black Studies program at UCLA. UCLA Chancellor Charles Young authorized funding for Karenga's program. The rank and file of the Black Student Union (BSU) were upset at having been uninvolved in the decision-making process. They called a meeting. Fearing the US organization, the BSU asked the BPP to act as security for the meeting. The BPP refused to take sides, but agreed to back up the BSU's majority decision regarding the program. On January 15, the BSU voted against Karenga's program. (55) At a follow-up meeting two days later, Carter and Huggins were shot and killed. (56)

"[Local Cointelpro head Richard] Held quickly took 'credit' for the killings [of Carter and Huggins], and recommended sending more cartoons. This was duly approved and resulted in the wounding of several more Panthers and the death of yet another, Sylvester Bell. In the aftermath, Held again patted himself on the back for such 'success' via internal memoranda." (57)

In 1969, Panther Ronald Freeman was shot by US organization members while selling BPP newspapers. (58) BPP member John Savage was killed by US members in San Diego on May 23. The BPP claimed that Savage, had witnessed the Carter and Huggins murders and was killed to prevent him from testifying at the US members' trial. (59) In all, four Panthers were shot [dead] and one wounded by US members in 1969. (60)

The theory outlined above suggests that genuine rivalries between two genuine organizations were exacerbated by the FBI to create war between them. On the other end of the spectrum of plausible theories, some suggest that the US organization was not a genuine part of the Black Power movement at all, but was in fact an anti-Panther death squad financed by the FBI. Elaine Brown suggests that she believes this was the case, at least after the Campbell Hall killings. (61) Former FBI infiltrator and agent-provocateur Earl Anthony alleges that he knows this to be true:

"When I met with [FBI Agents Robert] O'Connor and [Ron] Kizenski at our designated time [Aug. 6, 1968], ...[t]hey said they were tired of the 'Panther shit,' and the FBI had worked out a deal with Karenga where they would supply US with weapons and a master plan to destroy the LA Black Panther Party; and they were hoping to get something like that going in New York." (62)

Anthony's words have proven in the past to be untrustworthy, so this allegation is not worth very much. It is quite possible that he is continuing to spread slanderous disinformation on behalf of the FBI.

What gives some credence, though not proof, to the theory held by Brown and Anthony is that while the more conservative theory holds that the FBI was using each group against the other, the repression faced by the BPP was much more severe than that faced by the US organization. The pattern of killings described above is a case in point. Another is that the FBI opened a conspiracy investigation for Panther Geronimo Pratt for a bank robbery that the FBI knew had been committed by US members. (63)

Another example of police favoritism towards US is the initial police response to the killings of Carter and Huggins, which was not to go after the US organization or any other suspects in the murder, but instead to deploy over 150 police officers to raid a Panther apartment and arrest 75 Panthers, including the remaining Panther leadership, on charges of intending to murder US members in retaliation! (64) Later, the police arrested US's Stiner brothers, Larry and George. The Stiners were given life terms and sent to San Quentin, but, adding to suspicions that US members were deliberately given light treatment, they "walked away from a minimum security area on March 30, 1974." (65) Larry Stiner turned himself in on Feb. 5, 1994, while George Stiner remained a fugitive. (66)

FBI killers?

Another theory holds that, whatever the role of the US organization as a whole, those who shot Carter and Huggins were knowing FBI agents. This theory, put forward by Huey Newton, relies on the testimony of a Black former FBI informant named D'Arthard Perry, also known as Ed Riggs and, according to him, the FBI code name "Othello." (67) Perry claims he reported directly to L.A. FBI agents Brandon Cleary, Will Heaton, and Michael Quinn. (68) Perry's testimony is more plausible than Anthony's (although it is possible that both are true), and is worth quoting at length:

"Shortly after my arrival in the parking lot I heard shots from the direction of Campbell Hall.

"Within a few minutes I observed George Stiner, Larry Stiner, and Claude Hubert also known as Chuchessa, jump into a 1967 or 1968 light tan or white, four-door Chevrolet driven by Bra'ndon Cleary of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I saw this car drive away from the parking lot of Campbell Hall. I left the campus on foot and immediately went to FBI headquarters by bus. I inquired as to the whereabouts of Brandon Cleary at this time, and, was told he was not available. I am informed and believe that the four-door Chevrolet described above was the property of a man called 'Jomo,' a known member of the US organization, now deceased.

"I recognized George Stiner, Larry Stiner, and Claude Hubert from seeing them prior to this date on the 14th floor of the Federal Bureau of Investigation building on several occasions in the company of Brandon Cleary, the man I had seen drive them away from the Campbell Hall area.

"I had been told to give a report within twenty-four hours of the incident to my supervising agent, Will Heaton, on the 14th floor of the Wilshire Blvd. Federal Investigation building.

"A few hours later, I went to the building and met with my supervising agent, Will Heaton. While in his company, I observed George Stiner, Larry Stiner, and Claude Hubert in the company of Brandon Cleary on the 14th floor of the Federal Bureau of Investigation building. I asked Cleary, 'what was happening' and was told that there had been a 'fuck up' -no one was to be killed by 'our' people. I also learned that the car that had been driven by Cleary was taken from the place Jomo Shambulia had parked it and returned to the same parking space after the incident. I also learned that it was Claude Hubert who fired the shot that



killed John Jerome Huggins and the same Claude Hubert who fired the shot that killed Alprentice 'Bunchy' Carter and not George or Larry Stiner.

"Through information and belief, I have knowledge that George Stiner and Larry Stiner were Intelligence Gatherers for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and were working for Brandon Cleary and others when John Jerome Huggins and Alprentice 'Bunchy' Carter were murdered. I am informed and believe that Claude Hubert was on January 17, 1969 at the time he reportedly executed John Jerome Huggins and Alprentice 'Bunchy' Carter, an agent in the service of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Los Angeles office. I am further informed that this same Claude Hubert was subsequently transferred to an east coast office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, specifically New York, New York." (69)

White former FBI agent M. Wesley Swearingen relates a similar account:

"Soon after I had been assigned to the L9s Angeles racial squad, I was told by a fellow agent that another agent on the squad had arranged for [his] informers in the United Slaves to assassinate Alprentice Carter and John Huggins. Following [the agent's] instructions, informants George Stiner and Larry Stiner shot them to death on the UCLA campus on January 17, 1969.

"I later reviewed the Los Angeles files and verified that the Stiner brothers were FBI informants. I know that D'arthard Perry was an FBI informant and that he is telling the truth about the FBI."(70)

Again, while the details are disputed, the basic fact is not. Regardless of how direct or indirect the FBI's role was in the murders of Carter and Huggins, clearly at the very least the FBI encouraged the hostilities that culminated in the murders, then claimed credit after the murders took place.

Target: Geronimo Pratt

Following these murders, Carter's former bodyguard, Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, rose to fill the local leadership vacuum, and became the next local Cointelpro target for "neutralization." (71) As noted, LAPD officers fired at Pratt's bed during the December 1969 FBI-planned raid on L.A. Panther headquarters. (72) The FBI also took actions to isolate Pratt from the rest of the Party, leaving him vulnerable to state attack. (73) In September 1970, the LAPD's Criminal Conspiracy Section (CCS) was working to indict Pratt on false murder charges, although "according to both [former informants] Tackwood and Cotton Smith, there had been considerable controversy in CCS and the FBI over exactly what murder to use in preparing a case against Pratt." (74)

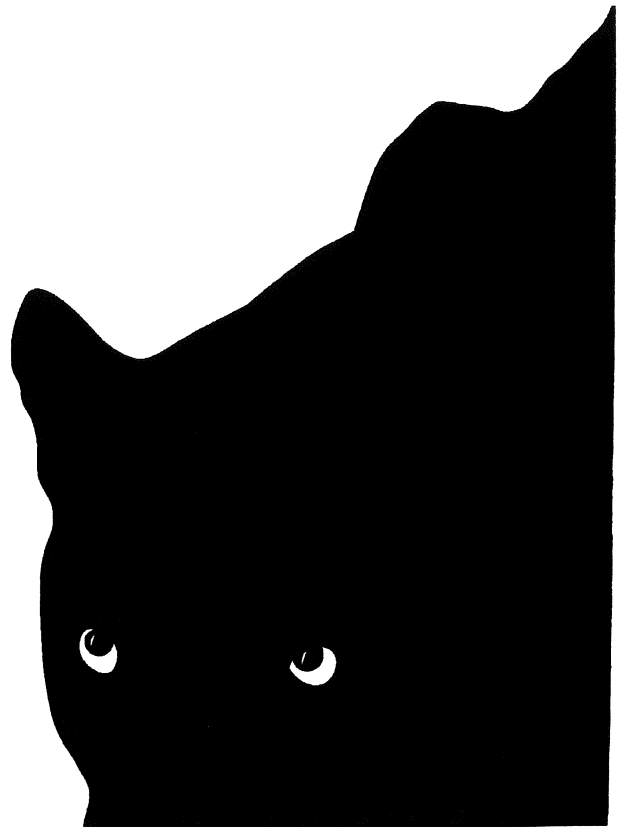
They arrested Pratt on Dec. 4, 1970. (75) He stood trial in the spring of 1972 at Los Angeles Superior Court on charges of murdering Caroline Olsen, a white schoolteacher, on a Santa Monica tennis court on Dec. 18, 1968. (76) The prosecution relied heavily on the testimony of LAPD and FBI informant Julius Carl "Julio" Butler, who at the trial denied being an informant. (77) Butler to this day denies that he was ever an informant, no doubt in part because such an admission would jeopardize his position as

chairman of the Board of Trustees of Los Angeles' oldest and most prominent Black church, the First African Methodist Episcopal Church (First A.M.E.). (78) Pratt argued, and maintains today, that he was at a BPP meeting in Oakland, 400 miles away from Santa Monica, on the evening of the murder. (79) The FBI's success in isolating Pratt from the BPP prevented Party members, except for Kathleen Cleaver, from testifying on his behalf and corroborating his alibi. (80) Then-FBI agent Wesley Swearingen reports:

"My supervisor and several agents on the racial squad knew that Pratt was innocent because the FBI had wiretap logs proving that Pratt was in the San Francisco area several hours before the shooting of Caroline Olsen and that he was there the day after the murder.

"The Los Angeles office had a wiretap on Panther headquarters in Los Angeles for a two-week period covering the date of December 18, 1968. These wiretap logs could prove that Elmer Pratt was in the San Francisco area on the day Caroline Olsen was shot to death.

"I reviewed the Black Panther Party file that showed that the Los Angeles FBI office had had a wiretap on the Panther office at 4115 South Central Avenue from November 15, 1968 through 2:00 P.M., December 20, 1968. I had worked with wiretap information since 1952, and this was the first time in my twenty-five-year career that I could not find the Panther wiretap logs for the period November 15 through December 20, 1968. Someone had destroyed those logs so there would be no proof that Elmer Pratt had been in the San Francisco area on December 18, 1968.





"A wiretap by the San Francisco FBI office Bt placed Pratt in the Bay area just hours before the shooting. An illegal wiretap in Oakland Bt placed Pratt in Oakland the day after the murder. "This is a total of three wiretaps known to the FBI with information that placed Pratt in the San Francisco area before, during, and after the murder of Caroline Olsen, and yet the FBI withheld this information from the court and the jury." (81) Pratt was convicted of first degree murder on July 28, 1972. (82)

"At present, Geronimo Pratt remains in prison after nearly two decades in California, a state in which the average time served on a first degree murder conviction is 4.5 years. During a 1988 parole hearing, Los Angeles Assistant District Attorney Dianne Vianni went before the board to explain why: Pratt should not be released, she stated, because 'he is still a revolutionary man.'"(83)

Cointelpro-BPP was not limited to attacks on BPP leaders or even members. Outside supporters, too, were subject to "neutralization."

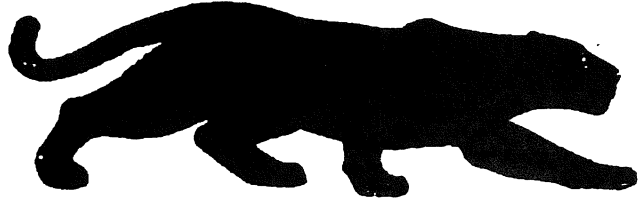
"Held also assumed a leading role in destroying the Panthers' white supporters, and is known to have written the false accusation that actress Jean Seberg, an outspoken advocate and fundraiser for the BPP, had been sexually unfaithful to her husband and was pregnant by 'a prominent Panther leader.' This bit of poison pen prose found its way into print on May 19, 1970 in the syndicated column of a 'cooperating journalist,' Carol Haber, and caused predictable complications in Seberg's marriage. The actress, whom Bureau profiles had already described as being 'mentally unstable,' became very emotionally distraught at such disinformation, suffered a spontaneous abortion, and subsequently attempted suicide on the anniversary of this event each year. After several tries, she was successful [in June 1970]. According to former agents, who were there, Held was gleeful at the 'effectiveness' of the Seberg gambit."(84)

Learn our lessons

To those who seek to emulate the BPP, it is not enough to know that the state smashed the BPP. To these activists, the important question is what the BPP could have done differently to ensure its own survival. Briefly, the internal problems of the BPP that led to its demise all have to do with a failure to adequately prepare for state repression. For instance, the short-term gains of being above-ground – having public offices and having publicly known membership – do not look worthwhile in hindsight, 40 martyrs later. (85) Flashing guns in front of news cameras popularized the BPP, and made a political point asserting the right to self-defense, but it also made it easier for the FBI to paint the BPP as a dangerous group that had to be crushed by any means. The BPP could also have benefited from tighter discipline on questions of study and theoretical work, and from a greater emphasis on the importance of political theory.. Finally, the BPP tolerated illegal drug use in its ranks, and Huey Newton's cocaine use in particular hastened the demise of his leadership. (86)

Repression, while not the only aspect, was a key factor in the decline of both the Black Panther Party and its Southern California chapter. Believers in the illusion that the U.S.

government supports free speech, freedom of assembly, human rights, liberty, justice, and democracy –or that the government is invincible –will tend to be complicit in America's crimes, often without even knowing that the crimes exist or that they are criminal. Thus, it is of the utmost importance to build public awareness of domestic repression. Building public opinion against domestic repression is a necessary prerequisite to its eradication.



Notes:

1. On the BPP's Serve the People programs, see Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*, Doubleday, New York, 1992, p. 16, and *The Black Panther: Black Community News Service newspaper*, Berkeley, Spring 1991, pp. 20-21.
2. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*, South End Press: Boston, 1990, pp. 37-99.
3. The quote is one made publicly by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover on 15 June 1969. See Reginald Major, *A Panther is a Black Cat*, 1971, p. 300.
4. Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Black Panthers Speak*, Da Capo Press: New York, 1995, p. 64. The remark was made while Newton was in jail (1967-1970).
5. Brown, op. cit., p. 360.
6. Churchill and Vander Wall, op. cit., pp. 77-94.
7. Brown, op. cit., p. 413.
8. Ibid., pp. 414-415.
9. Kit Kim Holder, dissertation: *The History of the Black Panther Party 1966-1972: A Curriculum Tool for Afrikan Amerikan Studies*, 1990, p. 62. Amherst College Library, Amherst, Mass.
10. Brown, op. cit., p. 113.
11. Earl Anthony, *Spitting in the Wind: The True Story Behind the Violent Legacy of the Black Panther Party* Malibu, Cal: Roundtable, 1990, p. 38.
12. Ward Churchill, *Z Magazine*, March 1989, p. 100.
13. Huey P. Newton, dissertation: *War Against the Panthers: A Study of Repression in America*, University of California Santa Cruz, June 1980, pp. 64, 65.
14. Brian Glick, *War at Home: Covert Action Against U.S. Activists and What We Can Do About It*, South End Press: Boston, 1989, p. 77.
15. Churchill and Vander Wall, op. cit., »:39'; *Washington Post*, 30 July 1971, p. 6.
16. Ward Churchill, *Z Magazine*, March 1989, p. 100; Churchill and Vander Wall, op. cit., pp. 179-381.
17. Leslie Hemstreet, *Z Magazine*, July 1990, pp. 19-26.
18. Brown, op. cit., pp. 118-124.
19. Ibid., pp. 131-132, 138, 142, 153, 291.
20. Ibid., p. 134.
21. Ibid., p. 137.
22. "An Introduction to the Black Panther Party," pamphlet, John Brown Society, Berkeley. Edited, with new material, by the Radical Education Project, Ann Arbor, Michigan, May 1969, p. 15.
23. Brown, op. cit., p. 151. Anthony, op. cit., p. 49.
24. Brown, op. cit., p. 155.
25. Ibid., p. 181.
26. Ibid., pp. 201-202.
27. *Black Panther newspaper*, 21 February 1970, p. 12.
28. Major, op. cit., p. 300.
29. *Black Panther newspaper*, 21 February 1970, p. 19.
30. Major, op. cit., p. 301.
31. Brown, op. cit., p. 181.



32. Newton, op. cit., pp. 108-109.
33. Holder, op. cit., p. 308.
34. Ibid., p. 235.
35. Major, op. cit., p. 302.
36. Ibid.
37. Brown, op. cit., pp. 204-205, 211.
38. Churchill and Vander Wall, op. cit., p. 84.
39. Holder, op. cit., p. 307.
40. Brown, op. cit., pp. 204-205, 211.
41. Holder, op. cit., pp. 52-53.
42. Ibid., p. 307.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., p. 306.
45. Ibid., p. 243.
46. Newton, op. cit., p. 14.
47. Holder, op. cit., p. 286.
48. Newton, op. cit., pp. 102-103.
49. Churchill, op. cit., p. 100.
50. See for example Foner, ed., op. cit., p. 50; Brown, op. cit., p. 142.
51. Brown, op. cit., pp. 109, 189-191.
52. Ibid., p. 153.
53. Ibid.
54. Rolling Stone, 9 September 1976, p. 47.
55. Brown, op. cit., pp. 160-164.
56. Ibid., pp. 165-167.
57. Churchill, op. cit., p. 100.
58. Brown, op. cit., p. 184.
59. Holder, op. cit., p. 231.
60. Rolling Stone, op. cit., p. 47.
61. Brown, op. cit., pp. 176-177.
62. Anthony, op. cit., pp. 50-51.
63. Churchill and Vander Wall, op. cit., pp. 81, 406-407.
64. Brown, op. cit., pp. 168-170.
65. Los Angeles Times, 5 February 1994, p. A25.
66. Ibid.
67. Newton, op. cit., p. 104.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., pp. 105-107.
70. M. Wesley Swearingen, FBI Secrets: An Agents' Expose, South End Press: Boston, 1995, pp. 82-83.
71. Churchill and Vander Wall, op. cit., pp. 77-94, esp. p. 79.
72. Ibid., p. 84.
73. Ibid., pp. 85-87.
74. Ibid., p. 87.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., p. 88.
77. Swearingen, op. cit., pp. 85-86.
78. "Past Haunts Ex-Panther in New Life," Los Angeles Times, 24 May 1994, p. 1.
79. Churchill and Vander Wall, op. cit., p. 88.
80. Ibid.
81. Swearingen, op. cit., pp. 86-87.
82. Churchill and Vander Wall, op. cit., p. 90.
83. Ward Churchill, Z Magazine, June 1990, p. 90.
84. Ward Churchill, Z Magazine, March 1989, p. 100.
85. In part because of the FBI-promoted factionalization of the BPP, and in part because it is not always clear who was a Panther, the exact number of BPP martyrs is disputed. Earl Anthony even claimed there were more than 338, but his credibility and motives the suspect, so his undocumented claim is not worth much (Anthony, op. cit. pp. 23, 33-34.). Twenty are listed in The Black Panther: Black Community News Service newspaper, Berkeley, Spring 1991, pp. 20-21. Another ten are listed in the Summer 1991 issue of the same newspaper, pp. 14-15.
86. Brown, op. cit., p. 271.

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Come Back Forward

By Taalam Acey

We need you to Come Back Forward
 Sorted into the monolithic mysteries of missing links
 Between cotton fields and killing fields
 These brothers need rebuilding
 Whether they're burned out in cubicles
 Or burning up on blocks
 Whether they've been pushing pencils



Or pushing rocks
 They done tried to go from capital to capitalist
 But it wasn't enough action in their auction
 So they been walkin' into prisons
 Like roach motels
 And the prison industrial complex
 Done eliminated the division
 Between slave quarters and cells
 And look at him sitting there
 Still thinking that this is a white man's world
 When his cell mate is white
 And his cell mate is thinking if we could just
 Get rid of these niggas
 I could economically improve my trailer-park life
 Meanwhile the NET is destroying the minds
 Of all colors of young men
 The NET: Nigga Entertainment
 Television
 Constantly broadcasting
 The crippling passions
 of the at-risk young population
 Showing videos and shows
 That make 70s blacksploitation films
 seem like the work of August Wilson
 That's why I needed to have daughters
 to give Ida B. Wells, Harriet Tubman and
 Queen Mother Moore
 The opportunity to come back forward
 I tell them they think they can't get past
 "Her breast... Her ass"
 but you gotta make 'em
 take 'em under your wings
 make 'em rise
 make 'em understand that the heaven
 between your thighs
 can't compare to the salvation
 behind your eyes
 Revolutionary negotiation
 He can't get wet if he can't get wise
 remind him of the late 19th century and
 Southern Reconstruction
 when black women made a pact not to touch him if he
 wasn't about nothing
 What happened then?
 Brothers couldn't smoke sess
 On corners
 Cause they was too busy smoking sessions in Congress
 But in this millennium the next could've been Malcolm X
 Is somewhere right now taking
 a swig off of a malt liquor
 Called Black Death
 Talking about "Damn that
 Billboard was right
 This here do put hair on a nigga's chest"
 Tell 'em you ain't impressed
 He can go home and feel his own damn chest
 If he can't take sex

Like Fredrick Douglass
 "No Struggle no Progress."
 You can't process this request
 Till he stops confusing his manhood
 with his baguettes
 Tell him to tuck in his long-ass chains
 And pull out some self-respect
 Holding up street signs
 Like somebody's paying him overtime
 Grown ass man gotta run like a coward
 Everytime the police comes
 And cause he calls himself a player
 Now your son wants to be one
 The costs of clowns in the community is building
 And our children simply can't afford it
 Tell his backward ass to play the bottom
 Till he's up and ready to come back forward!



WE WERE FREE FOR A WHILE

By Steve D. McCutchen aka Lil' Massai

Back to back we stood In the face of a political minotaur disguised as the U.S. government and its agencies. In Oakland, California, the Black Panther Party sprang to life and reached Baltimore, Maryland, after the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy. The Party reached me and I came in to avoid the Vietnam War and to write for the Panther newspaper. Others came because they had outgrown the reform issues of the non-violent civil rights



movement, as the Black Panther Party would become the only black revolutionary political organization to exist inside of Fortress America. This is a journey, taken from journal entries, letters and memories, that moves among the black men and women of the Black Panther Party who thumbed their noses at the powers that be and who lived and died believing that we were free for a while.

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THANKSGIVING:

A Celebration of Genocide and U.S. Imperialist Lies

By Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

It's interesting how history is whitewashed. Many of its most horrendous crimes are not just concealed but often repackaged as benevolent and honorable deeds to be commemorated and celebrated. Thanksgiving is an example.

The true history of Thanksgiving is very different from the false story we are taught in American schools and through mainstream channels. The first unofficial Thanksgiving occurred in 1621 following the Pilgrims surviving their first harsh winter in Plymouth, Massachusetts – with the help of local Indians. There was no warm, loving relationship between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag and other Indians – Certainly not on the Pilgrim's part. They had straight away built an eleven-foot high wall around their settlement to keep the Indians out. Just a few days before the "Thanksgiving," Miles Standish, one of the leading Pilgrims, had led an expedition to try and kill one of the local Indian chiefs. The Indians who were on hand for the celebration were neither invited nor welcome.

The first official Day of Thanksgiving in Massachusetts Colony was sixteen years later in 1637. It certainly wasn't to celebrate

their loving relationship with the Indians. It was declared by John Winthrop, the governor, to celebrate the return of an expedition sent to wipe out the Pequot Indians on the Mystic River. They claimed to have massacred over 700 men, women and children in a surprise attack.

Whitewashing and glamorizing these sorts of crimes set the stage for purging the memory of the two greatest crimes of American History, the genocide of the Indians and kidnapping and enslavement of tens of millions of Africans. Both of these crimes were of such magnitude and duration as to form the very foundation and character of American civilization. Every square inch of land was stolen and over 100 million were killed and/or reduced to the status of beasts of the field. White racism was created to justify this horrible, criminal history, and the Thanksgiving Day mythology is the insulting denial and gloating over the deed – the pinnacle of hypocrisy.

The survivors of the American genocide of the indigenous peoples were enslaved or herded into concentration camps euphemistically called "reservations" – the first of which was at New Haven, Connecticut. The captured Indian resistors of New England were sold into slavery in the colonies of the Caribbean. The Natives on the reservations were made to suffer cultural genocide (as were the slaves) – decade after decade – down to the present. Casinos are the final hypocrisy and cultural degradation.

Likewise, the second greatest whitewashed crime of America was the murders of over fifty million Africans in our brutal forced transport away from our native lands and to the Americas, to serve as slave laborers that cultivated, enriched, and indeed built America on this stolen land; The destructions of our culture, heritage and histories, the systematic rapes of the Black female slaves and domestic servants (women and girls); and our subsequent forced migrations into urban refugee camps to serve as super cheap laborers, where we remain confined. Euphemistically called "the hood" The Blacks/New Africans who are today concentrated in the urban centers are, like the reservation Indians left to a slow deterioration, but instead, with the club and dope to aid our distraction and destruction.

Before there was an underground railroad, freedom for many enslaved Africans was found within the Indian and Mexican nations. The struggle and history of suffering of America's Native and African people's is a common one. And many poor whites rejected the lies of white supremacy and joined with the Natives and New Africans in our struggle against national, racial, and class oppression and exploitation at the hands of American imperialism and capitalism that has designs to keep us divided and ruled. It is in the spirit of *the unified struggles of the oppressed against the ongoing oppressive system*, that the New African Black Panther Party – Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC) joins with the Red Heart Warriors Society (RHWS), the White Panther Organization (WPO), the Brown Panther Organization (BPO), the New African Service Organization (NASO) and all other revolutionary and progressive groups and peoples in exposing truth and struggling to raise the banner of genuine self-determination and revolutionary people's power for all oppressed peoples. So we say New African power to New African people! Native power to Native people! Latino power to Latino people! Mexican power to Mexican people! And Panther Love! to all who stand firmly opposed to imperialism and the lies that sustain imperialism! – Rashid



The African Blood Brotherhood and the Proletarianization of Blacks in Amerika

By Comrade Big Warrior

The African Blood Brotherhood for African Liberation and Redemption (ABB) was the first Marxist Revolutionary Black Nationalist organization in Amerika. Founded in 1917, it grew rapidly during the wave of white racist riots known as the "Red Summer of 1919," the ABB was a secret, armed, community self-defense-oriented society headquartered in Harlem.

Many of the "Blood Brothers" were combat vets who had fought in France in World War I. Many were workers, conscious of their proletarian class exploitation and oppression in capitalist society, as well as their caste oppression as "Negroes," and national oppression as members of a nation of a new type defined by color and refined by slavery, terror and segregation.

The Nation of New Afrikans in Amerika, which was then a peasant nation concentrated in the cotton-producing "Black-Belt South," was also evolving into a proletarian nation in the industrial centers and defined urban ghettos. The white riots were pogroms directed at these ghettos, which were expanding with the "Great Migration" from the South to the North and the West that had been encouraged by the need for industrial workers during the World War. Many of the white rioters were also returned war vets. There was also a big resurgence of the KKK at this time that peaked in the mid-1920s.

The urban Black proletarian had to be tough to survive. They were consigned to the dirtiest, most menial and demeaning jobs, and there was brutal competition for these jobs. The ghettos were overcrowded and transient, and Black on Black violence was rampant. Rubes from the country were sheep to slaughter for the lumpen criminals who preyed on them, and they kept coming as mechanization was displacing share-cropping in the South. Black workers quickly learned that whites who were not racist against them were probably class-conscious and Socialist.

Militant unions like the IWW brought together workers of all ethnic backgrounds. But the core of leadership of the ABB was part of another migration from the Caribbean to the U.S., and particularly to Harlem.

The African Blood Brotherhood was the brain-child of Cyril Briggs, a light-skinned native of the Caribbean island of Nevis, where he was born in 1887. He migrated to New York on July 4th, 1905 and joined a growing community of West Indian Blacks in the city. That was the year of the first attempted revolution in Russia in which the Leninist Bolsheviks played a conspicuous role. The successful October Revolution of 1917 sent a shock wave around the world that was felt by oppressed people everywhere.

Lenin particularly had a lot to say to the colored peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries and directly to the Black people in Amerika.¹ Eventually, the ABB was absorbed into the

¹ John L. Garder, "African Americans in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s: The Development of Transcontinental Protest," *Western Journal of Black Studies*, Fall, 1999:

"Black Communists were later to laud the fact that, in his writings, Lenin had discussed the revolutionary potential of 'the Negroes in America' for the proletarian revolution in the U.S. The first recorded Communist Party discussion of Black liberation in the U.S. took place with Lenin's participation at the Comintern's Second Congress in Moscow in 1920. The Comintern was responsible for the international organization of Communist activities. At the Congress, in his 'Theses on the National and Colonial Question,' Lenin mentioned the need to support American Blacks. He said, 'Communist parties must give direct support to the revolutionary movements among the dependent nations and those without equal rights (e.g., in Ireland, among the American Negroes, etc.) and in



underground communist Workers Party of America (WPA) which evolved into the CPUSA. The communist party founded by the Russian Federation declared its stance on the Negro Question in 1920: "The Communist Party will carry on agitation among Negro workers to unite them with all class conscious workers."

Leninism distinguished itself from earlier Marxism by its conscious commitment to the national liberation struggles of the colonial and subject peoples which Lenin recognized to be closely linked to the World Proletarian Socialist Revolution. The class conscious ABB veterans and West Indians shared an understanding of a wider world of exploitation and oppression than the "Jim Crow" South and the ghetto street corner, the world of global capitalist-imperialist empire and world proletarian socialist revolution – a world illuminated by Leninism.

The ABB was committed to the liberation of Afrika and the whole of the Afrikan Diaspora from white world supremacy and capitalist-imperialism and saw the necessity of overthrowing this system to end the racist oppression of Black people and other people of color. As the immediacy of defending the oppressed Black communities from the violence of vigilante white mobs subsided, the ABB comrades began to see more and more the need to win white comrades to fight against white racism in the overall workers movement and all strata of society and prepare the U.S. for proletarian socialist revolution.

the colonies' (Draper, 1988, p. 337).(15) Considering the importance of the 'national and colonial question,' Lenin asked for opinions and suggestions regarding Blacks in the U.S. (Draper, 1988).(16) John Reed, a White Communist Party delegate from the U.S. delivered a report on the 'American Negro problem' to the congress and to a special committee headed by Lenin.

"This discussion became critical in the development of work by the Communist Party U.S.A among African Americans. Reed's report contended that such nationalist movements as Garvey's failed because Blacks did not want a separate national existence. As Blacks considered themselves at home in the U.S., Reed argued, the Communist Party should recognize them as an important asset in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeois power structure. Reed's report was decisive in the Comintern invitation to a commission of Black 'revolutionists' to the Soviet Union (Draper, 1988).(17)

"The Soviet invitation for African Americans to visit Moscow was accepted in 1922, when poet Claude McKay and Communist Party member Otto Huiswood attended the Fourth Congress of the Comintern. Due to their participation, the Comintern made its first formal declaration on the 'Negro Question,' It pledged that the Communist Party would be committed to racial equality, equal wages, social and political rights and would include Blacks in trade unions. It also promised to hold future conferences of Blacks in Moscow (Robinson, 1983).(18)

"These Comintern discussions in Moscow marked the genesis of the Communist International's development of a coherent program towards Black liberation. Huiswood and McKay were members of a Negro Commission of international delegates established to discuss the question. The commission recognized the need for liberation of Negro peoples internationally. The work of Blacks in the U.S. was to be one aspect of the movement to overthrow international capitalist oppression by substituting class-consciousness with race-consciousness. In attempting to accomplish this, delegates recognized that, given the success of the UNIA, race-consciousness could act as a catalyst for revolutionary reform. The Comintern, therefore, increasingly recognized the need for a special program to attract African American members and began inviting Blacks to Moscow to discuss this program (Robinson, 1983).(19)"

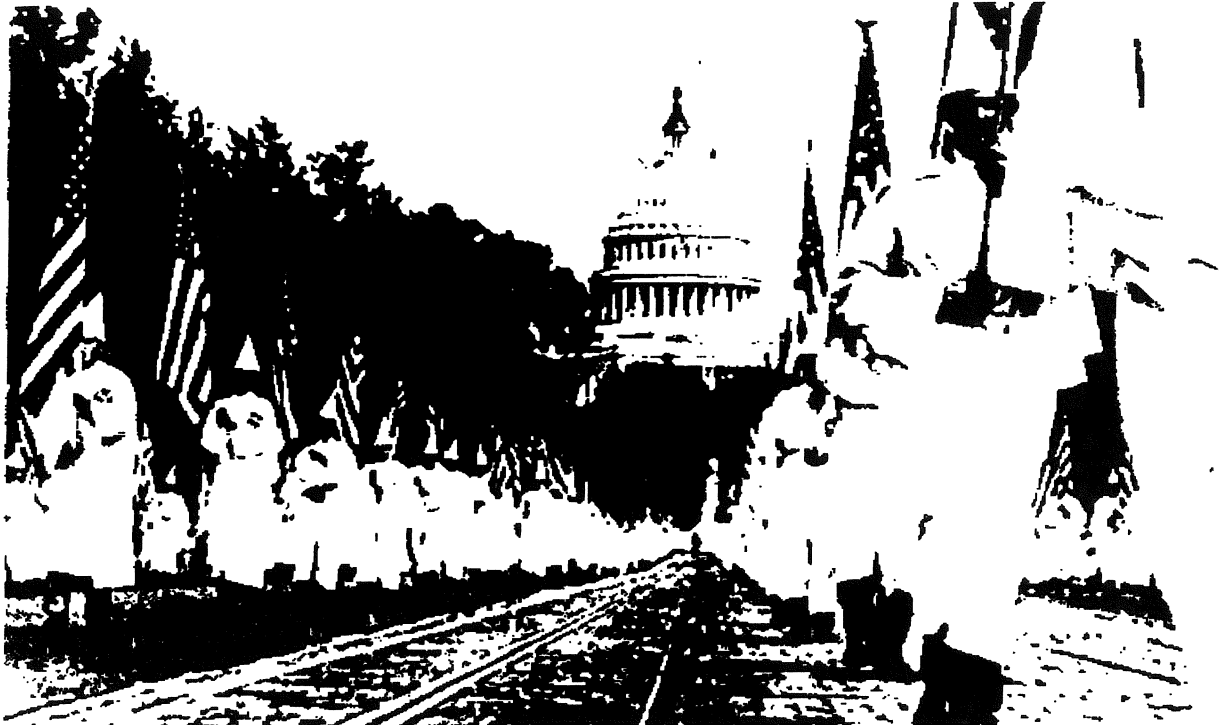


Former ABB members formed the core of the CPUSA's Black cadre, and they were rigorous in opposing white racism in the Party and the unions and mass organizations influenced by the Communist Party. In the 1920s & 30s, the Communist Party initiated work in the South, including forming sharecropper unions uniting both Black and poor whites and unions among southern textile workers.

This was the CP's most revolutionary period – though it tended towards "left economism" and "dual unionism" – and a period when many Blacks were first exposed to Communist ideology and organization. The "Harlem Renaissance" saw a flowering of Black consciousness and culture, and most of the artists and intellectuals involved were strongly influenced by Marxism-Leninism and leftist ideas.

The World War had shaken things up and raised Black expectations. Most expected progressive changes after the war and were disappointed and frustrated by the resurgence of KKK activity and overall reactionary backlash that swept white Amerika. Large numbers turned to the new Communist Party looking for direction.





Although the ABB was short-lived (1917-1924), its historical influence and significance was profound. It preceded the Black Panther Party by 40-some years, yet we can clearly see the ideological and political kinship. But given the betrayal of the CPUSA, Blacks had to rediscover this revolutionary world view and orientation, much as is happening today, 40-some years after the rise and demise of the BPP.

Some 2 million Blacks migrated from the South to the North and West from 1910 to 1930. Within the South there was also a great migration from the rural to urban areas. By the time of the founding of the BPP in 1966, more than 80% of Blacks lived in urban areas and 40% in the North. In 1863, less than 8% had lived in the North. Since 1970, there has been a reverse trend, particularly from the West Coast, back to the South, but not back to agriculture.

Overwhelmingly, Blacks in Amerika have become proletarians (wage slaves), and the ABB and BPP represented this shift from rural peasant to urbanized worker and ghetto dweller and from the demand for land to the demand for socialism. The West Indian component of the ABB also promoted a heightened sense of internationalist consciousness and Pan-Africanism.

Cyril Briggs suffered under the handicap of a serious stuttering problem. To compensate for this, he concentrated on developing his writing skills, and he became a journalist. In 1912 he gained employment at the *Amsterdam News*, Harlem's most influential Black newspaper. Briggs' most influential contribution was a two-part editorial (Sept. 5 & 19, 1917) advocating the formation of an independent Black nation within the U.S. He threw President Woodrow Wilson's words affirming "...the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their government," right back at him. However, Wilson had no intention of recognizing the "right of self-determination" extending to Black people in the U.S., but Lenin did.

Briggs wrote against the imperialist world war and for self-determination for the Black "nation within a nation." His increasingly radical tone led to his break with the *Amsterdam News* in 1919 and the formation of his own magazine, *The Crusader*. It was through *The Crusader* that Briggs popularized and gave leadership to the ABB, which was begun in 1917.

Initially, the ABB grew as a faction within Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), but an intense animosity between Garvey and Briggs ensued. Garvey centered his attacks on Briggs' light complexion repeatedly calling him a "white man." Briggs sued him over this and won, though it was not easy to convince a white judge that being called "white" was an insult. Lawsuits flew back and forth and UNIA and ABB militants disrupted each other's meetings and rallies.

Garvey proposed a return to Afrika and facilitated emigration with his Black Star Line of steamships. This led him into public alliance with the KKK, who also supported "boating for Blacks," and conflict with the Socialists, Communists and the Black Civil Rights Movement, who were all delighted when Garvey was arrested for mail fraud, and some testified against him.

By 1928 there were some 14,000 Blacks enrolled in the Communist Party. Many of them came from the ABB.

The Communists were patrons of the Harlem Renaissance and provided funding for the Federal Negro Theater, the Federal Writer's Project, the Harlem Community Arts Center and the Harlem Committee for Better Schools. They also sponsored trips to the Soviet Union for many Black intellectuals and artists, including W.E.B. DuBois, the founder of the NAACP and publisher of *The Crisis*, Claude McKay, Harry Haywood, James W. Ford and Lovet Fort Whiteman, the first New Afrikan to study in Moscow, who proposed the formation of the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC), which was created at a conference held at Howard University in May of 1935. The ANLC organized labor strikes and mass protests against racism and fascism. — TBW



***Attention Prison Artists (and
Artists in General). Rising Sun
Press is Looking for Graphics!***

Topics can include any of the following themes:

*Working Class Solidarity
Prisoner Rights
Panther Power
Revolutionary Intercommunalism
Revolution is the Solution!
Black Liberation
Chicano Liberation
Third World Liberation
Women's Liberation
Abolish the Death Penalty!
Smash the Prison Industrial Complex!
Resist Imperialist Wars!
Resist the War on the Poor!
United Front Against Capitalist Imperialism
Stop Police Murder!
Stop Prison Torture!
Stop Sexism!
Free Mumia!
Free Leonard Peltier!
Free All Political Prisoners & POWs!
Free the Philippines!
Free Afrika!
Free India!
Hands Off Nepal!
Victory to People's War!
Remember Malcolm X!
Remember George Jackson!
Remember Fred Hampton!
Remember Huey Newton!
Remember Bobby Hutton!
Remember Hasan Shakur!
Hands Off Assata!
It's Right to Rebel!
Dare to Struggle Dare to Win!
We Must be Our Own Liberators!
Each One Teach One!
Rise Up!
Women Hold Up Half the Sky!
Defend Human Rights!
All Power to the People!*



ESSAY CONTEST!!

NABPP-PC has put out a call for the various street and prison tribes to unite to form a Red Fist Alliance (RFA) as part of the United Panther Movement (UPM). How can this best be done, what should be the rules and points of unity, and what should be its program? What are your ideas?

To stimulate debate and discussion and draw on the collective wisdom of the people, NABPP-PC is sponsoring an essay contest. First prize will be a set of the *Collected Works of Chairman Mao Tse-tung*. Honorable mention will win a copy of Comrade Rashid's new book *Defying the Tomb*.

All submissions should be in English, typed or hand printed clearly, and be postmarked no later than April 15th, 2011. Include your name and mailing address, and your street-tribe or organizational affiliation if any. Submissions are non-returnable and will become the property of Rising Sun Press. They may be edited before publication. The winner will be announced on May Day, International Workers' Day.

Send your essays to:

Rising Sun Press
PO Box 4362
Allentown, PA 18105



The Tradition

Carry it on now.
Carry it on.
Carry it on now.
Carry it on.
Carry on the tradition.

There were Black People since the childhood
of time
who carried it on.
In Ghana and Mali and Timbuktu
We carried it on.
Carried on the tradition.

We hid in the bush.
When the slave masters came
holding spear
And when the moment was ripe,
leaped out and lanced the lifeblood
of our would-be masters.
We carried it on.

On slave ships,
hurling ourselves into oceans.
Slitting the throats of our captors.
We took their whips.
And their ships
Blood flowed in the Atlantic
and it wasn't all ours.
We carried it on.

Fed Missy arsenic apple pies.
Stole the axes from the shed.
Went and chopped off master's head.
We ran. We fought.
We organized a railroad.
An underground.
We carried it on.

In newspapers. In meetings.
In arguments and street fights.
We carried it on.

In tales told to children.
In chants and cantatas.
In poems and blues songs
and saxophone screams,
We carried it on.

In classrooms. In churches.
In courtrooms. In prisons.
We carried it on.

On soapboxes and picket lines.
Welfare lines, unemployment
Our lives on the line,
We carried it on.

In sit-ins and pray-ins
And march-ins and die-ins,
We carried it on.

On cold Missouri midnights
Pitting shotguns against lynch mobs
On burning Brooklyn streets
Pitting rocks against rifles,
We carried it on.

Against water hoses and bulldogs.
Against nightsticks and bullets.
Against tanks and tear gas.
Needles and nooses.
Bombs and birth control.
We carried it on.

In Selma and San Juan.
Mozambique, Mississippi.
In Brazil and in Boston,
We carried it on.

Through the lies and the sell-outs,
The mistakes and the madness.
Through pain and hunger and frustration,
We carried it on.

Carried on the tradition.
Carried a strong tradition.
Carried a proud tradition.
Carried a Black tradition.
Carry it on.

Pass it down to the children.
Pass it down.
Carry it on.
Carry it on now.
Carry it on
TO FREEDOM!

Assata Shakur □





Comrade George Jackson

*It is now or never, brother.
It is the hour of the knife.
The major operation: the break
with the past.²*

— Kwame Nkrumah to Malcolm X

Comrade George: A Signpost on the Road

In all struggles for social change the general course of movement and development proceeds not in a straight line, but in a zig-zag fashion. This is a law of social development (revolution) and there is no exception to the rule. In other words, "story is the road we trod."³ And this road is characterized by stages, by uneven development, by periodic stagnation, by fits and starts, by breaks in continuity, by ideological splits, by setbacks and mistakes, by major and minor defeats and by big and small victories.

Since the emergence of the Prison Movement in the mid-1960s, its overall growth and development has been positive in spite of its many shortcomings. For the most part it is still pregnant with dynamic revolutionary possibilities, and in order to transform these possibilities into actuality there are a number of internal contradictions that must be tackled and resolved to smooth the path. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address every shade of contradiction that besets the Prison Movement, and we will not argue the point of which particular aspect of the contradiction is playing the primary or secondary role in the "sum of contradiction," even though we recognize its importance. No — the aim of this paper is to focus on one particularly disturbing internal contradiction which has grown along with the Prison Movement: that is, "ultra militancy" or "revolutionary posturing."

² *The Death and Life of Malcolm X*, Peter Goldman.

³ Renita J. Weems, p.222. *Black Theology* Vol. II. James Cone.

By the mid 1960s the integrationist Civil Rights Movement, which had been revitalized by the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation, had run its course. It was time for a new direction and a new leadership. As a response to this impasse, the Black Power Movement arose to chart a more militant course. Since nothing exists in a vacuum or splendid isolation, the sociopolitical struggles being waged in the black communities in particular, and the larger society in general, reverberating in the prisons. As prisoners began to become more politically conscious, they also began to come to the forefront of the liberation struggle, creating various organizations and challenging, rebelling and struggling against depressed conditions on the inside. As a result of this prison activism, prison struggles in turn reverberated on the consciousness of the black communities and larger society. Thus the inside/outside, back and forth interconnection was born.⁴ It became even more solidified as activists/revolutionaries from the communities entered prison.

Other community-based organizations began to take up the "cause" and align their struggles with the plight of the prisoners. Some of the most significant prison rebellions to dramatize the inside/outside interconnection were the case of the Soledad Brothers in the West, the Attmore-Holman Rebellion in the Deep South, the Attica Rebellion/Massacre in the urban North, and the Pontiac 17 Rebellion here in the Midwest. Within the Prison Movement these events are exalted as courageous and audacious revolutionary events. Out of these struggles figures such as George Jackson, I.D. Barkley, Yukeena Dotson, Chagina Dobbins, Fred Ahmed Evans and Sam Melville, to name a few, have emerged to be revered and placed in the pantheon of martyred revolutionaries. In fact, these events and the political lifestyles of those who led them have come to serve as models for a whole generation of prisoners who were inspired by them.

In connection to this, the role that revolutionary literature⁵ has played in awakening political consciousness among the prisoners must be emphasized. For this literature more than anything else is responsible for personal transformation of many prisoners. It is through books that prisoners have come to meet, love and be influenced by revolutionary figures. In every political movement there emerges a body of work which most shapes the vision and behavior of the revolutionaries of that generation. Spontaneously, these writings generate a "required reading list." Among the books to most inspire the Prison Movement are; *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*; *Soledad Brother*; *To Die For the People*; *Sun Views*; and *New Afrikan P.O.W. Journals*.

From this group of books, the works of George Jackson would have the greatest impact upon the political consciousness of prisoners. A warrior and a major theoretician, Jackson was one of the leaders who best expressed the ideology of the entire radical movement because his influence was not limited to the Prison Movement alone, but reached a wider group of radicals. No single figure has had more impact upon the militancy of prisoners than George Jackson. It was he more than anyone else who set

⁴ This paper draws its understanding of the growth and development of the Prison Movement primarily from the New Afrikan P.O.W. journals (i.e., Discussion Papers 1 & 2), especially its interpretation and conception of the dialectical interplay of the inside/outside interconnection.

⁵ This paper recognizes and salutes Red Books of Massachusetts and Left Bank Books of Seattle, Washington for their consistent



the tone for the rising militant prisoner of the seventies.⁶ This is validated by the fact that it was his assassination that ignited and gave impetus to the Attica Rebellion on the other side of the continent, when one morning in September 1971 prisoners emerged from "their" cells and filed through the chow-hall wearing black armbands in homage to him, and as a protest against his execution.



If it can be said that George Jackson imbued prisoners with a militant revolutionary attitude, then it must also be said that the Attica Rebellion introduced hostage-taking as one of the most effective ways to dramatize prison grievances. In the wake of Attica a rash of hostage-taking situations erupted in numerous prisons and jails across the country, and even today, 25 years later, we still see prisoners making these same desperate moves. The Attica Rebellion was also significant because for the first time in history the Prison Movement was catapulted onto the international stage, politicizing the grievances of the prisoners, and linking them to the colonial struggles for national liberation throughout the Third World. The martyred revolutionary prisoner L.D. Barkley⁷ would characterize this event and period as "The sound before the fury."

From Militancy to Ultra-Militancy

The current ideological struggle being waged by the various factions inside the independence movement today is a necessary and unavoidable process. It shouldn't be viewed

as something negative, divisive and counter-productive, although that will surely be the case in some instances. What matters most isn't whose line is the most militant, but which lines and programs best correspond to the material reality of our situation and advance us closer to national independence.

Although we recognize the political significance of prison uprisings, and we hold in esteem the exemplary behavior of all those who have acted to dramatize our grievances and push the Movement forward, especially the martyred prisoners who made the supreme sacrifice and paid with their lives, we nevertheless also feel that there is now a pressing need to re-examine the "role of force and violence," particularly the strategy of hostage-taking. Furthermore, we have come to identify the tendency of "ultra-militancy" as being a retardant and corrosive inside the Prison Movement, because this tendency is largely responsible for scores of prisoners now being locked into the prison system with long additional extra time.

Briefly defined, ultra-militancy is the tendency which says that the only real revolutionary is the one who is an agitator, is confrontational and is always ready to take hostages or correct a pig. We categorically reject this one-dimensional view. There are 5 basic styles and/or modes of behavior for a politically active prisoner to assume: (1) the Political Educator mode; (2) the Agitator Organizer mode; (3) the Conspirator Organizer mode; (4) the Theoretician Organizer mode; and (5) the Ultra-Militant mode. These are distinct modes and are not absolutely ridged or mutually exclusive. One can, and often does, shift from one mode to another; sometimes a prisoner may even combine more than one mode at any given moment.

The political educator's primary concern is consciousness-raising by teaching history and revolutionary theory. The agitator's primary concern is to keep things "stirred up" by agitating and constantly confronting the administration about prison conditions or abusive pigs; the ultimate aim is to organize the prison population for mass confrontation. The conspirator has a furtive style and seeks to work in the least conspicuous way to politicize prisoners – all the while conspiring with new recruits and those on the verge of release about how to establish political bases and how to carry out revolutionary armed activity. Whereas the "agitator" is more inwardly focused, the "conspirator" is more outer-directed. The theoretician is a writer who is primarily concerned with developing and disseminating revolutionary strategy and tactics for the Movement. This is intellectual work that amounts to "subversive propaganda" because it organizes the readers around a set of ideals which illuminate the path, and it provides the ideological ammunition to undermine the enemies' political and cultural hegemony. The ultra-militant generally exposes the line, "when the killing starts then come and get me" or "If it ain't about some bloodshed, then I don't want to hear it." Once politicized, the ultra-militant begins to shun books and theory, or any type of mass work among the population, and moreover, the ultra-militant has the tendency to deliberately exaggerate and magnify minute contradictions.

⁶ We are not hero-worshippers and we do not have an exaggerated view of the role of the individual in history. It is the masses who are decisive. Nor do we wish to diminish that role that other West Coast cadre have played in helping to transform the colonial/criminal mentality.

⁷ Executed by fascist goons during the retaking of Attica.



In other words, ultra-militants have the tendency to take a non-antagonistic contradiction and blow it up, that is, to convert it into an antagonistic contradiction. They will then polarize the situation by drawing an artificial line and characterizing one position as "hard-line" (read real revolutionary) and the other as "soft-line."

In the aftermath of the 1970 San Rafael, Marin County Civic Center Massacre,⁸ Henry Winston (member of the Communist Party USA) wrote a book entitled "Strategy for a Black Agenda." In this book there is a particularly interesting chapter (entitled the meaning of San Rafael) in which he attempts to point out a lesson in mature political thinking by drawing a parallel between the lives of two sets of brothers: Lenin and Alexander and George and Jonathan Jackson. For instance like George and Jonathan, Lenin and Alexander had an undying love for each other. Winston would characterize it as a unique bond of "Love and Honor." Some other similarities in there are; at age 17 both Lenin and Jonathan would get drawn further into the movement by the activities of their brothers. (2) Alexander, Jonathan and George were executed by agents of the state: Alexander officially by hanging, and Jonathan and George summarily by gunfire; and (3) after the deaths of their brothers, Lenin and George each would become grief stricken and find himself confronted with a choice about how to carry on the struggle. Herein lies the wisdom of Winston's insight: he foresees this fork in the road, and in an almost prophetic voice he warns revolutionaries against adventurism, acting

hastily and reacting impulsively in a spirit of vengeance and retribution. Continuing to use the life of Lenin as a model, Winston then goes on to point out how Lenin repudiated his brother's "line of struggle" and instead took a different road by devoting himself to the long term strategy of mass revolution.⁹ (as we know Lenin's decision would ultimately turn out to be the correct strategy, because he and the Bolshevik party would seize state power in 1917.)

So speaking on behalf of the Movement in an ominous voice, Brother Winston would entreat comrade George saying "It is our fervent hope that George Jackson, unjustly imprisoned these many years, and himself a courageous symbol of indomitable will to Freedom of his triply oppressed comrades, will take under consideration the lessons pointed out by Lenin. In doing so he can fulfill the remarkable potential he has manifested in serving the cause of liberation."¹⁰ We know Comrade George never got a chance to "fulfill his remarkable potential" because he was summarily executed by the state before he could join the "wider struggle" outside. His death was a tragic loss and it wounded us near the heart.

As sharp as Winston's insight was in comparing the lives of George and Jonathan with Lenin and Alexander, he failed to take into consideration one crucial factor; George, unlike Lenin, was "caught under the hatches"¹¹ – facing the death penalty. As such he was a desperate man, pressed for time. We agree with the spirit and principal of Winston's admonition against adventurism and impulsiveness. But it is one that does not fit George's situation squarely. Winston is not the only one to have misread the situation that was confronting George and has taken his lifestyle as a license to embrace ultra militancy.

Let's examine two of the most salient events concerning Comrade George's prison life: first, the Soledad Brothers case where a guard was killed as a retaliatory measure: Second, his execution and the circumstances surrounding it.¹² With respect to the retaliatory killing of the guard, if Greg Armstrong can be credible, he reports in his book "The Dragon Has Come", that George admitted to breaking the pig's neck. He didn't take any hostages. No, he simply committed the act and let the deed speak for itself. Now the question is, if he did it, should he himself have done it or been a direct participant in it? We don't think so. No that move should have been delegated because George was an advanced cadre – in short Field Marshal material. And although he had not yet garnered the level of support that he would later attract, things were nevertheless becoming favorable for his release. (For instance his connection to the

⁸ In 1970, at Marin County Civic Center, Jonathan Jackson, Bill Christmas, James McClain and the judge were killed by prison guards in a kidnapping situation. Ruchell McGee and the state prosecutor were also severely wounded.

⁹ Alexander was a member of a clandestine organization which sought to topple the Russian monarchal state by force of arms. He was tried, convicted and hanged for an attempt upon the life of the Czar.

¹⁰ Strategy for a Black Agenda, Henry Winston, p. 254.

¹¹ Soledad Brother, George Jackson.

¹² In 1970 W.L. Nolen, Cleveland Edwards and Alvin "Jugs" Miller were killed by a guard on the rec yard at Soledad Prison. The pig was not charged for those murders. Fleeta Drumgo, John Clutchette and George Jackson were indicted for murder and would come to be known as the Soledad Brothers.



Panthers was ripe with possibilities and James Carr¹³ had just been recently released.)

With respect to the second event, in which comrade George's life was snuffed out, there have been several versions of the story to emerge. Of course, one is the "official" version in which his lawyer¹⁴ smuggled a gun into him and George supposedly tried to sneak it back into the maxi max unit, under an afro wig, to be used later as an escape weapon. Then there is Louis Tackwoods¹⁵ version, which says there was indeed a real escape plan afoot, but that the authorities had gotten lucky because a dry cleaner had supposedly discovered the escape plan inadvertently left in the pocket of James Carr. The political police seized upon this opportunity by returning the "escape plan" to his pants pocket, the turning the whole operation into a controlled situation (i.e. encapsulation)¹⁶ and going so far as to plant an inoperative gun with dud bullets.

A third version would surface in *The Guardian*, an independent Marxist weekly, and one of the most reputable papers on the left, in which according to the San Quentin 6,¹⁷ a group of fascists came to George's cell and confronted him, and he managed to disarm the gunman. Realizing that this was perhaps his date with death anyway, he then slipped into "martyr's mode" and went about "knocking" informants and agents of repression, finally running out of the unit, into the open yard in order to draw gunfire away from other cadre housed at maxi max. Lastly at the grassroots level, it is commonly believed that George had indeed become boiling with vengeance and decided to fulfill his declaration that "my forefather trembled when his brother was lynched but my brother's immolation means war to the death, war to the utmost, war to the knife!"¹⁸

Now we may never learn the full story or the complete truth of the circumstances surrounding his death or what actually motivated George that day. Only he and the cadre would know this. Our guess is that it's probably bits and pieces of all the above versions. However one thing is quite clear: in none of these scenarios was he trying to take hostages, hold down the ground and complain about grievances. No,

comrade George was a Black Guerilla of the highest order and as such he strove to practice basic guerilla strategy, that is, "get down and get up / strike and melt."

TWINS

On the other side of ultra-militancy is revolutionary posturing. So close are these two tendencies we could think of them as twins: not identical twins, but twins nevertheless with similar characteristics. And just as ultra-militancy has grown up inside the Prison Movement, so too has revolutionary posturing come to assume a certain "stature" of its own. Just as we have come to identify ultra militancy as a retardant and corrosive inside the movement, we also have come to view revolutionary posturing as a negative, extremely harmful, and often hideous, practice. Briefly we define revolutionary posturing as the tendency of half-baked, militant prisoners (sometimes well-meaning) to project themselves as serious and genuine revolutionaries. Here are a few striking examples: 1. It is revolutionary posturing when a prisoner baits or needles a pig unnecessarily, and then when the prisoner is roughed up and confined to a disciplinary unit, the prisoner tries to project himself or herself as a hard core revolutionary.

2. It is revolutionary posturing when a neophyte comes into the movement seeking instant recognition as a prisoner of war or political prisoner based upon a small act (e.g. hitting a pig in the mouth) or a paucity of work. To be sure, there are many newly emerging militant revolutionaries in prison deserving wider recognition and support. We feel, however that it is wrong for them to elbow their way to the front of the line through exaggerated and inflated measures of self promotion, eventually making themselves equal to, and or overshadowing, long standing, genuine PP/POWs in the public's eyes.

(3) Another form of revolutionary posturing is embodied in the individuals who have assimilated a good grasp of the theoretical, political, or historical knowledge of the social problems, but are yet unwilling or incapable of purging themselves of negative habits that "damage the line" and or cause security problems. These individuals have only made partial transformations. In other words as Richard Wright would say, "They are a warning and not an example."¹⁹

By far the most hideous tendency of revolutionary posturing is when individuals politicize their case "after the fact" and present themselves as "the suffering servant." For instance banks are nerve centers of capitalist society and we consider an attack on them a legitimate act of expropriation. This doesn't mean that all prisoners who were captured for robbing a bank have the right to re write the script and declare themselves POWs. No – we must make a distinction based upon the prisoner's original and conscious intent, and the aims and purpose for which that money was to be used. According to Zayd Malik Shakur,²⁰ some expropriations are carried out to sustain the group itself, and others are earmarked to finance movement projects. To give another example of revolutionary posturing, if an individual in prison kills a pig because of personal beef, although we may

¹³ James Carr was a Black Guerrilla of unswerving character; an indomitable will. He was one of George's closest comrades. They met in the California penal system and became fast friends and made the transformation from lumpen to revolutionaries. A glimpse of their history together can be read in James Carr's autobiography *Bad*. In the early 70s, he was mysteriously executed outside his home in California.

¹⁴ Stephen Bingham, radical people's lawyer, subsequently cleared of charge of aiding and abetting. He stayed on the lam for years.

¹⁵ Lewis Tackwood is a sleazy, slimy informant who worked for the counter-intelligence unit in California, infiltrating various black left wing organizations. He also was/is the brother-in-law of James Carr. His treachery can be read in the *Glass House Tapes*.

¹⁶ Encapsulation comes from the vocabulary of counterinsurgency jargon. It is a term used to describe a special tactic of surveillance where the revolutionaries have been identified (unknowingly to the revolutionaries) and are allowed to carry out their activity until such time as the political police call for a round-up.

¹⁷ In the aftermath of the assassination of Comrade George, six prisoners were charged with a variety of charges from "rioting" to murder. They became the San Quentin Six. Later all were acquitted.

¹⁸ *Blood in My Eye*, George Jackson, p. 29.

¹⁹ *Black Boy*, Richard Wright.

²⁰ *Spring Came Early*, Zayd Malik Shakur.



applaud the pig's death, the assailant doesn't have the right to politicize the case because it wasn't carried out in the revolutionary spirit of retribution.

Now, this doesn't mean that prisoners who acted out of personal motivations don't have the right to raise funds for their cases. It is obvious that they need financial help for lawyer fees and so forth, but we feel that it is the worst kind of deception to appeal to the masses and rally them around a flat out lie that they are PP/POWs. This practice, in effect, drains material resources and political and spiritual support, away from long standing genuine PP/POWs. So this practice of hustling the masses, of appropriating and building monuments to ourselves, is wrong. And we shouldn't engage in it or give credence to it.

The fundamental principles that differentiate PP/POWs from prisoners who engage in revolutionary posturing are work, sacrifice and service to the Movement. There certainly are high profile PP/POWs who should get our special attention. ("Special attention" is due not because of their celebrity status, for not even veterans have the right to simply rest on their laurels, but because the political dynamics of their cases and because of work, sacrifice, and service.) The whole point is that we have no choice but to evaluate and distinguish people inside the Movement by the roles they have performed and are capable of performing in the future. Realistically, there are some who are eloquent orators who articulate our brand of politics well. Others are accomplished writers and effective organizers. There are even some who are more audacious than others. Most importantly not all theories or political lines are of equal value; some are progressive and some are downright backwards. Therefore we must come to terms with the fundamental inescapable law of uneven development. The idea of "Absolute equality" is a myth and we need to debunk and collapse it, for everybody does not possess the same amount of political knowledge or social skills. In any case high profile or not, no genuine PP/POW should simply be left in the lurch "to rot bleed and die,"²¹ nor should those who pose as what they are not be accorded PP/POW status. We are not attempting to establish a hierarchical structure of elitism, but a structure of relevance where what matters most is socially necessary labor.

In conclusion in focusing on the socially destructive tendencies of ultra militancy and revolutionary posturing, this paper has explored some issues relevant to the "style of work", "cadre building" and "basing the party in clandestinity". Since we are discussing the need to change our style of political work in the public arena and communities, then why should it be any different on the inside as well, where people are constantly held under the gaze of state authorities? Some of us are 'contaminated' and surveillance will never be relaxed. Therefore we should attempt to conceal precisely how we relate to the newcomer. For example with respect to an activity like political education class, a subtle method for holding sessions is the one on one, or 3 person cell, where the cadre hangs out together (i.e. weight pile:, handball court:, work site walking in the yard) and discusses the assigned material in an informal style. (Absolute clandestinity is almost impossible in

prison given the fact that all our mail and literature passes through administrative channels and that our Afrikan/Islamic style of dress and "look" is obvious. However, we can minimize obstacles and interference with our work by making it a little more difficult for observers to identify each and every one among us who is politically active, or for them to learn exactly how we're "pushing the line." For concerning the politicizing and training of cadre we should be thinking in terms of "planting seeds beneath the snow."²²



Moreover if "good practice is the result of good practice" ²³ then we also need to begin cultivating the clandestine style of work immediately, and we must eliminate ultra militancy and revolutionary posturing. For the bottom line is this: we are concerned with avoiding pitfalls... We are concerned with materialist factors of revolutionary warfare," and with how to avoid moving "to fast with too few"²⁴ Were concerned with having a sufficient degree of consolidation before the next "open" attack by the enemy, so our Movement loses none of its dynamism and continuity, and the scattering of our ranks is kept to a minimum. We wanna take a few steps forward, without taking any steps backward. Vita Wa Watu

Tchaka Olugbala Shabazz

Predators Unit

Indiana State Prison

December 1995

Jalil Muntaqim and Lorenzo Komboa Ervin deserve particular mention, and any paper dealing with the Prison Movement would be remiss if it failed to acknowledge their theoretical contributions and incessant practical work.

Also we would like to thank prison abolitionist D. Austin for her persistent work and assistance to prisoners, especially her work against the death penalty.

²² False Nationalism/False Internationalism, E. Kani.

²³ "So That We Don't Fool Ourselves – Again," Spear and Shield.

²⁴ New Afrikan POW Journal, Bk. 4, p. 9.

²¹ Arm the Spirit, Winter Issue 1984, Hugo Pinell



Editorial Commentary:

We agree wholeheartedly with Comrade Tchaka's criticism of ultra-militancy, but have to question his statement that "what matters most isn't whose line is most militant, but which lines and programs best correspond to the material reality of our situation and advance us closer to national independence." Is 'national independence' a realistic goal at this stage and the path to Black liberation? Can any nation win independence from global capitalist-imperialism – before it is brought down? And once it is, is national independence what we want?

As Comrade Rashid put forward in his recent essay, *Black Liberation in the 21st Century: A Revolutionary Reassessment of Black Nationalism*, (Right On! #19, Spring 2010):

"In developing our line on the Black National Question in the U.S., we have applied the method of historical dialectical materialism and deepened the analysis put forward by Huey P. Newton of the original Black Panther Party (BPP), which means we do not hold dogmatically and idealistically to outmoded ideas and formulations that no longer fit the current situation. Instead we base our analysis on the study of concrete conditions in the context of their actual historical development, realizing that everything is in a state of motion and development from a lower to a higher level, and that correct ideas develop in struggle and contradiction with incorrect ones."

"That we New Afrikans are now a predominantly proletarian nation – and one without a national territory – is an advantage to the cause of building a multi-ethnic, multi-racial socialist Amerika. Indeed, it thrusts us into playing a vanguard role in leading the whole working class and the broad masses in pulling down the capitalist-imperialist system and achieving social justice for all."

This conception of our historical role corresponds with Lenin's and Mao's lines on the National Question which we contrast with Stalin's and dogmatic continuation of the BBT. Lenin and Mao saw the national question primarily as a matter of building the ranks of the proletarian revolution to pull down the system of imperialism. In fact, in all of his writings on Black liberation in the U.S. Mao consistently talks about merging the Black liberation struggle with the proletarian revolutionary struggle in the U.S. He doesn't mention the land issue once. In *A New Storm Against Imperialism*, (April 16, 1968), he stated:

"Racial discrimination in the United States is a product of the colonialist and imperialist system. The contradiction between the Black masses in the United States and the U.S. ruling circles is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the Black people in the United States win complete emancipation. The Black masses and the masses of white working people in the United States have common interests and common objectives to struggle for."

"Therefore, the Afro-American struggle is winning sympathy and support from increasing numbers of white working people and progressives in the United States. The struggle of the Black

people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class."

"In his August 8, 1963 article, *Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism*, Mao's emphasis is on racial discrimination, not "Free The Land!" He sees Black liberation as driving forward the United Front Against Capitalist-Imperialism and pulling white workers and other strata towards socialist revolution in the U.S. The issue is not integration versus separation but revolution."

"Even Malcolm X came to embrace this position. In fact, every popular, independent Black leader who came to hold this view and actively advanced it was promptly assassinated. Why? Because neither separation nor integration threatens the imperialist system – socialist revolution does!"

In the dialectic between the inside and the outside, it is on the outside, in the oppressed communities, that we can develop people's power and set the stage for socialist revolution. Our focus on the inside must be to transform the "slave pens of oppression" into "schools of liberation" so we can set an example for the movement on the outside and provide it with solid revolutionary community organizers. In turn the community-based people's movement can give muscle to the demand for prisoner's rights."

At this stage prison riots are as counter-productive as ghetto riots. We need to build revolutionary organization. Since the time of George Jackson and Attica there has been an eight-fold increase in the imprisoned population and a switch to super-max facilities to suppress potential rebellion. At Marin, Attica and elsewhere, the ruling class has made it quite clear they will kill hostages to discourage hostage-taking. Ultra-militancy falls into the enemy's strategy. Our strategy must be to defeat theirs."

For this reason our discipline in the Prison Movement must prohibit the resort to violence except in the extremity of self-defense. We must build a legal, political movement aimed at winning mass support in contradiction to their illegal and violent violations of prisoners' human and democratic civil rights and pit our humanity against their lack of it. To create public opinion favorable to socialist revolution we must expose the conflict of class interests and the unfitness of the monopoly capitalists to rule society. Moreover, we must demonstrate the fitness of the People to rule by building base areas of people's power and creating a situation of dual power in the oppressed communities in the context of building the worldwide united front for socialist revolution:

We believe that it is the historic destiny of the nation of New Afrikans in Amerika to play a leading role among the oppressed peoples of the World in overthrowing capitalist-imperialism and advancing humanity to a higher stage of political-economic organization based on the principles of social justice and equality.

Our unique history and position within the "Belly of the Beast" gives us the opportunity to deal the coup de grace to U.S. imperialism. Our long suffering at the hands of white-supremacist Amerika gives us a bond with all who have suffered racist and national oppression and enables us to be truly internationalist in outlook. — Rashid

'Justice or Just Us'



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