

THE MOVEMENT

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The New and Official Newsletter of the Human Rights Coalition
for the union of Prisoners' Families

Economic Insanity: State Spends \$700 Million to Build 3 New Prisons during Economic Crisis!

In a recent television interview, comedian and activist, Bill Cosby was quoted as saying, "We [America] incarcerate more than we educate." Mr. Cosby went on to say that \$8,000 is spent on educating someone, while \$41,000 is spent on sending and housing someone in prison. "Anyone with sense would know that if you spent more on educating and providing skills to the public, you would ultimately spend less on incarcerating the public."

The common sense Mr. Cosby spoke was echoed by a recent California Superior Court decision finding that due to over crowding, California's Department of Corrections were violating the 8th Constitutional Amendments right against cruel and unusual punishment. Prison inmates are being forced to live in unsafe environments, and are being subjected to various forms of mental and physical abuse." the Court held that California must release 10,000 inmates within the next 2-3 years.

California's governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, applauded the ruling, however, the State Attorney General vowed to appeal the decision citing that a release of 10,000 inmates into the population would present a significant risk and danger to society. In its ruling the Court rejected this argument finding that the funds saved as a result of a reduced prison population would not only aid to the failing economy, a percentage of those funds could also be invested in education and crime prevention programs. The Mayor of San Francisco provided a picture for the Courts ruling stating that California has built twenty-two prisons in the last decade, but only one University.

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Editor's Note

Greetings!

Welcome to THE MOVEMENT. The Human Rights Coalition (HRC) has had a tremendous amount of positive feedback and compliments from the families of prisoners, prisoners, human rights groups, and prison abolition groups in regards to the HRC's official newsletter THE MOVEMENT. We thank everyone for showing interest in the HRC, its mission and programs, and in the organizing of families of prisoners we are attempting to do on the behalf of prisoners and our communities that we may bring about a change we can really believe in. To be successful in our objectives, the HRC really need for prisoners to get their families and friends involved with the work HRC is doing, or else our work will be for nothing. Che Guevara once said, "Words are beautiful but action is supreme". THE MOVEMENT newsletter is simply the voice of the families of 48,000 state prisoners and 40,000 county prisoners, but the newsletter alone is not going to change the prison system, the laws, or prevent the further deterioration of our community. Only action by a statewide grassroots movement can change the corrupt and bankrupt political, economic, and social problems in Pennsylvania, but we must come together to bring about this change. Lets make it happen y'all!

We are living in insane times, people. Don't believe me, then check out the 'Economic Insanity' by Camara on the cover page. The country is in an economic crisis, teetering on the brink of a full collapse of the global capitalist economic system, but somehow the PA General Assembly was able to spend \$700 million of taxpayers' dollars to construct several new prisons throughout Pennsylvania. The state has 28 state prisons already, crime has been declining for over a decade now, so why the need to build 3 new prisons? I guess they have their eyes set on making more profit on imprisoning the tens of millions of citizens who have lost their jobs and homes from the economic crisis, and doing so with the very tax dollars these citizens forked over to the state treasury as taxpayers. What impudence!

Another informative article we have is on our beloved comrade Mumia Abu-Jamal in the section 'The Babylon System'. His fight is our fight, and our fight to Free Mumia must be heightened in Pennsylvania. The situation is crucial! As many of you are now just learning from the latest 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals decision in Mumia's case, the judges discarded their on legal precedent and rules when it came to Mumia's Batson legal claim, in order to deny him a new trial or complete exoneration. Instead, backroom politics were played by the judges to deny Mumia justice and freedom. What is going on with Mumia Abu-Jamal by the branches of U.S. government (Executive, Legislative, and Judicial) is what went on with former political prisoner Geronimo Pratt, where all three branches—including the police apparatus—worked closely together behind the scenes to prevent Geronimo from being exonerated and freed. Just read the book about Geronimo Pratt called 'The Last Man Standing' by Jack Olsen and you will fully understand the government intrusion that is currently at work to deny justice and freedom to Mumia. Support Mumia Abu-Jamal by organizing throughout Pennsylvania on his behalf.

In the Human Rights Coalition Report section, we have the article 'Torture, Inc.' and hopefully it will wake up many families of prisoners to the abuse, torture, racism, and corruption that their imprisoned loved ones are subjected to daily. This is what citizen tax dollars are being used for in all 50 states of America! We hope to encourage families of prisoners to join the HRC or create their own Chapter/Branch, and become prison abolitionists and

(Continued from page 1)

human rights activist on behalf of their imprisoned loved ones. Help to make a difference.

Everyone must read the article 'Class Struggle Over Race' by my White comrade D.G., in the section 'All Power To The People!' which I had the honor of editing. I believe D.G. an Anarchist and Anti-Imperialist, had the most profound article in this newsletter. A core group of politically conscious prisoners have been educating prisoners and society on the contents of D.G.'s article for over a decade now. Hopefully more and more African-Americans, in particular, will become aware of the class struggle in America spawned by capitalism as they are of the racial struggle. Many of you 'Obama-mites' may not like or agree with D.G.'s political/social observations on the race issue or of President Barack Obama, however, he speaks the Truth. That's right y'all, I have not been 'Obama-cized'. I think President Obama is going to follow the domestic and foreign policies of America since its inception just like every president that sat in the White House before him has done. President Obama will continue carrying out and subjecting the world to America's three evils of global capitalism, militarism, and racism, as our beloved Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated about the American empire. I doubt that will change one iota simply because an African-American is president of America. Despite President Obama's immense power it will prove absolutely useless in overcoming the system's insoluble antagonistic contradictions. Okay, so I have thrown political correctness out the window. Now bring on the hate mail.

Lastly, it has been a very long time since I have heard from any of my brothers on Pennsylvania's Death Row, in particular, my homeboy Seifullah at SCI-Greene. So thanks for the shot out brother. You are not forgotten. For all of you on Death Row, stay strong and continue the struggle for Justice and Freedom.

Families of Prisoners unite!!!

STRAIGHT AHEAD!

Mr. Kerry 'Shakaboona' Marshall, Co-Editor In Chief

(SCI-Mahonoy)

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HRC Mission Statement

- **To build a coalition of prisoner's family members** - because who cares more about a prisoner than his/her own mother, father, wife, husband, son or daughter - to end the injustice within our judicial system and abuse in our prisons.
- **To provide a safe place for family members of prisoners** where there is no embarrassment associated with having a loved one in prison. HRC is made up of family members who are facing the same stigma, restrictions, and dilemmas that you are going through this very minute. HRC is here to support you and give you a voice. And it is a place where, together, we can make a difference in the lives of our loved ones.
- **To make visible to the public the injustice and abuse** that are common practice throughout our judicial and prison system across the United States.
- **To support and work with other activist groups** in the abolishment of unjust laws and practices within the prison system and justice system, for example: the death penalty, "Three-strikes" law, juvenile justice, PCRA amendment, life without parole, police corruption, judicial corruption, inadequate health care in prisons, and more?
- **To abolish Long Term Solitary Confinement**, an inhumane and barbaric practice.
- **To encourage the rehabilitation of prisoners.** HRC understands that prisoners are human beings with problems that need to be addressed and most, in time, will return to society. The majority of prisoners are sent to prison for drug charges and acts which involve no violence whatsoever. A large number of these prisoners have led horrendous lives of drug abuse, child abuse, or neglect, in addition to impacts of racism, sexism, classism and homophobia. We as citizens should demand that the prison system focus on the rehabilitation of prisoners so that they can return to society as productive citizens with the skills needed to take care of his/her family.
- **To abolish the Prison Industrial Complex.** The charge to tax payers is \$35,000 per year to house a prisoner. The charge is \$65,000 per year for an older inmate. It is less expensive to send a person to Harvard for a year. Private corporations such as Eddie Bauer and Microsoft employ prison slave labor. Contracts are signed with private companies to provide food and clothing to prisons. New prisons continue to be built every year and are filled. Private prisons (not state owned) are now being built. These facts are evidence that the prison complex is a booming business designed to confine "prisoners" for profit; it is a business that is disguised as "get tough on crime."
- **To abolish the prison system.** The prison system is based on a foundation of exploitation, punishment and corruption. People of color make up 70 percent of the prison population. In a country with a declining economy, factories have moved overseas to exploit third world labor. 80 percent of prisoners are there for non-violent offenses (the vast majority of these drug-related), and the crime rate has been declining over the past 20 years. Women are the highest rising population in prison, and most of them are there for ?crimes of survival,? committed to feed themselves and their families. Most of the people in prisons are poor, brown, urban, functionally illiterate, unemployed or under-employed before they were locked down, and are there for non-violent crimes, mostly selling or using drugs. Obviously, the prison system is about all the other social inequalities in our system, and it does not work in its current incarnation. HRC supports its dismantling, and building in its place a system of accountability that is truly based in the community and focuses on healing, not punishing.

Love Knows No Bars

The love stories of HRC members offer ample evidence that love can survive, even bloom, despite laws that separate and challenge families for agonizingly long periods. The human spirit rises far above prison walls, as you'll read in these stories that members generously shared with us.

Hi, my name is Shameka, I figured I should introduce myself being as though I'm about to share a huge part of myself with you. If you don't mind I like to tell you about someone I know. He, to me, is what the word "man" means. He's calm, in a laid back sorta way ya know. He reminds me at times of the calm before a storm - still. He can be soft and warm when necessary. Somehow thru his circumstance he can still remain humble. I met him when I was eighteen; I'm now twenty-nine. When I first met him, I instantly knew he was "it" for me. Sounds corny I know, but it's true. I used to tell my friends that one day he would be my husband. I fell in love with his "swagga", the way he walked, the way he dressed and the way he talked. Somehow when he entered into a room respect was given, I loved that!

I like the fact that he's about his family. Nothing means more to him than his religion and his family. He is a strong Muslim brotha who is steady and unshakeable in his beliefs. I have never seen him sway, he stands for something and falls for nothing. He's a family man, the oldest of nine. This of course means he himself would love to one day start his own huge family. He loves children. I think watching them develop, grow and learn fascinates him. To be honest all of Allah's creations fascinate him. He loves nature, animals and most of all thunderstorms.

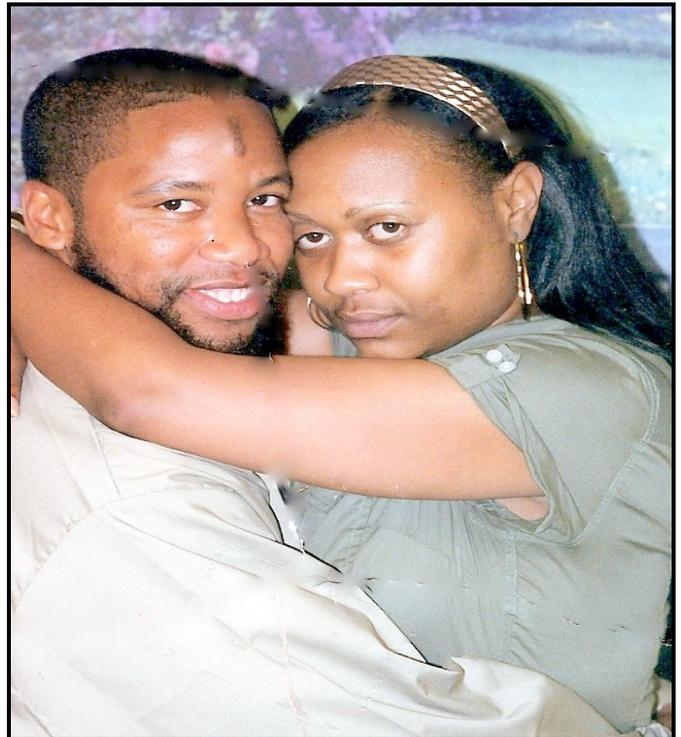
He has a true talent at art, he could draw the most beautiful picture and you'd swear an art major drew it. He's super smart and always striving to soak in as much knowledge as he can. He is well respected and never taken for a joke although, like myself, he's really silly. He's someone that you can sit and laugh with all day about a bunch of nothing. He's a man of his word, if he said it he meant it. Sometimes we are like two brick walls, us both being stubborn and all! I love him none the less and thank Allah for showing me that there are men who know how to treat a woman, his family as well as others properly.

Well out of all that I have told you, would you have guessed he was incarcerated? Well he is. Shocker huh? Who'da think it; Huh? This wonderful man is locked up. A lot of people have the misconception that they're all animals, they're in there behaving like they need to be locked in a cage. Wrong! Maybe you'd be surprised to know that most of them have extraordinary talents and are extremely educated far beyond any degree could ever offer. They have family, loved ones, wives and so forth. They are human and require love just like we do. I just think it's sad that a lot of them get lost in the system. They lose contact with their families for years and years. They're forgotten and alienated due to a slew of prison transfers and phone restrictions. That alone is inhumane enough to harden one's

heart. If nothing that I've said matters to you in this whole letter please let my final few sentences settle on your mind... you never know what word, what letter, what visit will be the one to help in some way. They're human and require love, patience, and guidance such as we do. They're striving for paradise just like you and me, they just happened to take a shortcut through hell.

I share this with you being the wife of an inmate, his name is Nafis. I love him deeply. I was there before his conviction, during and Insha Allah, I will be here upon his return. That's how you show a loved one love...just sharing with you a tad bit of a huge part of me.

I thank Allah for sending me someone who has helped me evolve from the woman I was into the woman I am today, all through my husband's actions and example.



Love Knows No Bars - If you are a family member, loved one, friend, or prisoner and wish to submit a brief article w/family visiting photo to the section 'Love Knows No Bars' about the love or friendship you have with someone incarcerated. Just forward your article w/family photo to the HRC's 'Newsletter Department for possible printing.

Is Innocence Irrelevant?

The following state cases represent the "Faces of HRC". As you read, ask yourself if justice is being served by the judicial system when it criminally tries and convicts individuals knowing of their innocence, and intentionally deny fair trials to others.

Mumia Abu-Jamal

Jurisdiction: Philadelphia County, PA

Offense Charge: Homicide

Date of Sentencing: 1982

Sentence: DEATH

On December 9, 1981, Journalist and former Black Panther Party member Mumia Abu-Jamal, was wrongly arrested for allegedly murdering Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner, and later wrongly convicted at an unfair and racially hostile trial in 1982 and sentenced to death by Judge Alberto Sabo.

Prior to Mumia's false arrest, he worked as a journalist, radio jockey, and part-time taxi driver. As a radio jockey at a local Philadelphia radio station and journalist, Mumia was an active community activist whom exposed racist attacks, abuse, terror and repression by Philly police against the MOVE group and ordinary citizens. Consequently, Mumia Abu-Jamal had become a target for neutralization by city officials and the Philadelphia police department to silence his voice of opposition on behalf of his community.

Mumia's legal case has been fraught with illegalities by the police, prosecutor, and judge. Illegalities of manufactured evidence, false witnesses, perjured testimony, withholding evidence, racial discrimination, and more. Mumia Abu-Jamal had been subjected to a kangaroo court trial by racist Judge Alberto Sabo who was overheard by his law clerk saying, "I'm going to fry that nigger." Mumia's sham trial was filled with judicial and prosecutorial criminal misconduct that violated his state/federal constitutional rights to a fair trial.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a world-renowned Political Prisoner held on Pennsylvania's Death Row at SCI-Greene in Waynesburg, PA. Mumia is an INNOCENT man. He is also a journalist, author, father/grandfather, and a Human Rights Activist. The world awaits the release from prison of this highly-respected FREEDOM FIGHTER.



Steven Falk / Reuters file

Do you think that Mumia was wrongly convicted of this crime?

Mumia Abu-Jamal
SCI-Green/#AM-8335
175 Progress Drive

Jerome Coffey

Jurisdiction: Philadelphia County, PA

Offense Charge: Homicide

Date of Sentencing: 1993

Sentence: LIFE (i.e., DEATH)

Jerome Coffey was a great local amateur boxer, and as a professional boxer who trained and sparred with boxing greats Bruce Seldon, Nate Miller, and Eric Harding, he was thought to become the next middle weight boxing champion from Philly. However, Jerome Coffey's professional boxing career was brought to an abrupt halt by his wrongful arrest for the alleged murder of drug dealer Johnny Moss in December 1992.

Jerome Coffey had been singled out as a possible suspect several months after the murder of Johnny Moss by police officer Peter Scallintino of the 23rd District after threatening and coercing the brother of the murder victim to provide false statements against Coffey, while intoxicated, to acquire an arrest warrant for Coffey, though Moss's brother was never on the scene or identified as an eye-witness to the murder of Johnny Moss.

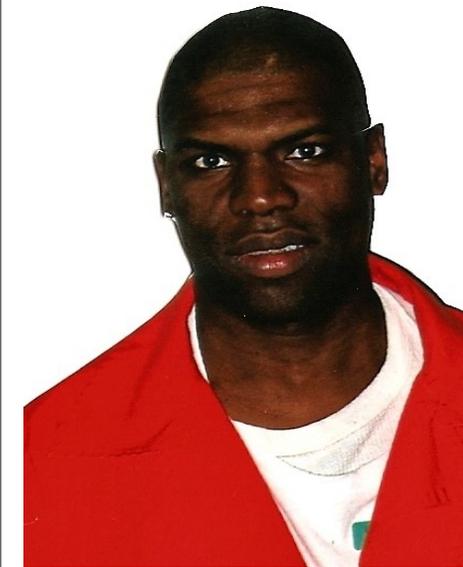
Jerome Coffey's discovery evidence and trial transcripts points to police manufactured evidence, judicial errors, illegal line-up, tainted photo spread, perjured testimony, and the withholding of exculpatory evidence. Such police and prosecutorial criminal misconduct all denied Jerome Coffey a constitutionally guaranteed fair trial. The Philadelphia Criminal Courts have once again convicted an innocent person and sentenced him to LIFE imprisonment (i.e., DEATH). The real murderer of Johnny Moss is still roaming the streets.

On appeal, the Pennsylvania Superior Court has recognized the malicious prosecution and judicial errors at the trial of Jerome Coffey, that denied him a fair trial. However, Jerome has yet to be exonerated by the appeals court of the crime.

Jerome Coffey is an innocent man who has been wrongly convicted of a crime he did not commit. His legal case is a prime example of how much the Pennsylvania Judicial System is in shambles and must be totally transformed to end its inherent institutional race, class, and gender discrimination and subsequent unfair trials and wrongful convictions of innocent people.

Do you think that Jerome was wrongly convicted of this crime?

Jerome Coffey
SCI-Green/#AS-1558
175 Progress Drive
Waynesburg, PA 15370



The Criminal Injustice System - In Pennsylvania, a Life sentence by the court is actually a death sentence! In Amerika, its judicial system is one-sided when it comes to dealing with poor people, especially with poor Blacks and Latinos. The public must be made aware that the judicial process is inherently racist, classist, unfair, unbalanced, and corrupt. Outrageous injustices like the Jena 6 fiasco occurs daily in the court rooms throughout Amerika. Brothers Shakaboona and Man-Shareef are just two of many politically conscious prisoners who have chosen to resist Amerika's judicial repression through court lynching.

The Home Front: Serving Our Community



“Lessons Learned in Community Organizing”

By Richard “Bro. Tut” Carter, HRC-Chester

“If we put more kids into a failed system, although we may house them where they cannot do any damage for a period of time, we should not be surprised when they emerge as more dangerous and hardened criminals.... Instead of spending money building prisons, we should be spending money preventing crime and rehabilitating youthful criminals.” **Judge Eugene Moore of the Oakland, Michigan, Family Court (“Beyond Prisons”, p. 146)**

For about 30 years I have worked as a prisoner’s rights advocate struggling on the frontline to reduce prison populations. Wherein, many lawsuits filed and thousands of hours of activism work sought to improve prison conditions and up-grade prison education and vocational programs to insure released ex-prisoners have fair access to jobs and other aid, reducing recidivist rates. However, in the mid 80’s many recognized that, despite our best efforts, prison populations continue to swell (i.e., more and more people were classified as repeated offenders and more youth fills new prisons). When I entered Graterford in 1981, in Pennsylvania the average prisoner’s age ranged between 23-39 and the population was merely 25,000 prisoners. As populations increased the age of the average prisoner decreased to 19-35 (when I was released in 2005, and the population reached 38,000.

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Approximately 75% of Pennsylvania's state prisons are comprised of young African- and Latino Americans residents from Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Erie, York, Norristown, Chester and other predominately low income communities. Of the 46,000 plus men and women serving time in this Commonwealth, over 30,000 are parents (of high-risk children). In 2005, when I returned home (Chester, Delaware County), the annual high-school drop rate for the nation was 50%, including Pennsylvania. Every incident in the news regarding High-Risk Youth blames them directly for even the city's poverty (where over half municipal budgets are used to fight violent crime, drugs peddling and stream-line the school-to-prison pipeline. When we surveyed the landscape of grass roots organizations, the faith community/prison ministries and, agendas of local government and the school board it was shocking to learn that, at-risk/high-risk youth have no advocates protecting them from academic and social failure.

About three years ago HRC-Chester was born and given a blessing in disguise. We needed an office and space to conduct organization business and to hold organizing meetings. (Although we had 37 members of families of prisoners and faith-community they were unwilling to organize fund-raisers or do anything to promote awareness of HRC in Chester). Yet, we jump-started HRC through accepting an agreement to perform non-license type renovation in exchange for rent and use of the YWCA of Chester. This historical building nearing 100 year in age was a poor structural shape and there was plans by the city to condemn the Y-building. Fortunately, when my brothers, Phil and John volunteered to help us open an office and have a place to meet showed our membership of the sincerity of this mission – they finally agreed to volunteer as well.

Still organizing was challenging – many of our members worked hard jobs and were too tired to personally lend a hand to paint walls, repair ceiling panels and hard wood floors or, lay sheet-rock. Many of them volunteered to provide food and soft drinks for those working to renovate the Y. After we completed two large areas in the Y it was suggested that each HRC member in locate at-risk youth within either their families or neighborhoods and, invite them to volunteer on Saturday's to help with HRC's renovation campaign. The hidden blessing revealed itself when six young people between ages 15-23 joined HRC-Chester's Youth Work-Study Team.

Imagine HRC-Chester Resource Center & Outreach Project, whose office is on the first floor of the beautiful YWCA of Chester – we opened on October 1, 2008 and, on November 5, 2008 HRC-Chester's Administrative Assistant was hired and, as a master-degree student of Early Child Development and former administrative aid of Chester's popular Diversified Apprenticeship Program HRC has the component we need for reaching phase two of our strategic plan.

To rally regional support, HRC-Chester joined and became an active forming team member of ***Education Not Incarceration Delaware Valley*** (Numbering more than 30 organization-coalition in the Philly/Chester regions ***Educate Not Incarceration (ENI)*** advocates reprioritizing resources away from prison systems into comprehensive and equitable education for all people. ENI is dedicated to supportive rather than punitive actions. ENI mobilizes grassroots campaigns through rallies, forums, petitions, media and lobbying....) Shifting legislative-appropriations favoring preventive and remedial programs for at-risk/high-risk youth – grants and other public funds can be made available to build programs which build jobs and provides public housing and other services.

The ***Youth Mediation and Support Network (YMSN)***, we're collaborating with Peace in the Streets... Peace on Earth. The goal of YMSN is to reduce youth violence in the neighborhood and high school in Chester, PA by mediating conflicts between rivaling neighborhood youth crews and helping these street-involved youth form positive connections to school and support networks in the community. HRC-Chester's lane creates jobs and mentoring programs – such as, special tutoring program to repair education-deficits which may account for poor learning skills in school. As program director of ***Diversified Housing Solutions, Inc/Green Pathway Training Program (DHS-Green jobs)*** Bro. Tut brought new programs on board (this program helps ex-offenders and high-risk youth overcome the challenges facing them upon re-entry back to society – which these challenges are not diminishing, DHS-green jobs programs have been developed, first in Philly to help veteran x-offenders – successfully assist inmates with transition from prison to the community). HRC-Chester role in DHS/Green jobs and YMSN are similar, in terms of our commitment to insure targeting, screening and selecting ex-criminals... for employment, we're compassionate yet, too we are wise, experienced gatekeepers!

As I see it today, no matter how we may feel about the inauguration of President Barack Obama -- no matter whether we think it fulfills Black-American's expectations after 500 year struggle or, not! We still have to make a choice today. We can either grumble wasting time and resources preaching and debating against helping the kind of social improvements our new president calls for nation. Or, we can use today's momentum for wide sweeping change to change America's legacy of institutional racism and economic apartheid (once and for all). And yet, we must continue grass root missions rescuing, restoring and improving conditions for prisoner's, their families and children, as well as protect others from abusive human treatment. HRC-Chester Resource Center & Outreach Project is a lesson in re-enfranchising low income communities -- lead by prisoner's families, former and current prisoners and, concerned and helpful citizens. ***Harambee (i.e., "Lets Pull Together!")***

For more on HRC-Chester visit: www.hrcoalition.org/AboutHRC-Chester or, write: HRC-Chester, 2 East 7th Street, Chester, PA 19013. e-mail us at: hrcchester@yahoo.com

The Home Front: Serving Our Community

Dismantle. Change. Build.

Critical Resistance 10 year Conference

Report Back by etta cetera

The last week of September people concerned with prison issues across the country caught cabs, carpoled, boarded trains and planes journeying to the Critical Resistance 10-year anniversary conference in Oakland, California. Over 4,000 people attended workshops, lectures, films, art events, and discussions. Members of HRC-Philly, HRC-FedUp!, StopMax, the Prison Poster Project and Fight for Lifers were among the Pennsylvania contingent

“As we celebrate 10 years of strategy and struggle to eliminate the prison industrial complex, we reflect on the mounting pressure built up by the continued reliance on surveillance, policing, and imprisonment in response to the harms we face. As we learned from our founding gathering in 1998 and our regional strategy sessions in the Northeast (2001) and the South (2003), building a movement to abolish the PIC takes all of our voices, hands, minds and hearts. Taking time to reflect, collaborate and witness the size and strength of our movement is crucial. So is what we do when we go back home. Lets continue to work together to tear down the walls.”

--Excerpted from Rachel Herzing's welcome letter CR10 project director.

Y'all know I say I'm a child of critical resistance. I follow that up by adding - some people go to college and I got to go to critical resistance conferences. I've had the privilege of attending the New York conference, the New Orleans conference and now CR 10 in Oakland CA – CR10... Let it be known! I love critical resistance and consider those efforts largely responsible for the understanding and work I'm involved in today.

Ok so the opening night event was so powerful and moving. Hundreds of people filled a huge hall, to listen to the analytical and encouraging words of Andrea Smith, Angela Davis, and Linda Evans along with many other doers of great deeds and thinkers of great thought. We listened with anticipation to hear the Welfare Poets sum it all up with rhyme and a beat and The All Nations Drum core kick the whole thing off behind a banner that demanded, “Free Leonard Peltier!”

Do you know one thing I thought was super awesome about CR10? There were many transgender folks and queer people at the center of the organizing. That's how it seemed to me, an outsider. Kicking off the conference with Miss Major speaking and introducing the film Transforming Justice was amazing! Transforming Justice was a film about how the criminal justice system affects Trans people and the organizing efforts surrounding that. It set the stage. Not here, it declared. Not at this conference will trans and queer issues be a whispered hush, an afterthought. These issue which are so often seen as secondary by conference organizers often leaves a lot of room for oppression to walk in and take a seat at the table. Starting off at the opening night, talking about how prisons affect trans people and making connections-let's all sing together – INTERSECTIONALITY! If some of the most marginalized folks— aren't at the center of the organizing – something's gonna be left out. When I saw the workshop listed that dealt with the intersections between trans issues and immigrant rights and the prison system. i got so excited! That's what i'm talkin' 'bout. Words of Miss Major are sticking in my head right now, she said,

“What you do matters. Everything is important. Keep going. Keep trying.”

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Fight for Lifers Report Back

Overall the spirit of the Fight for Lifers, both east and west, were high in the assessment of **panel**. We felt like the presenters were great, bridges were built, ideas were born and strategies shared. Dion from Reconstruction Inc's youth leadership program (L.E.A.D.) spoke on how these issues are in the family and we have to start there, cuz if we don't what are we doing? (Fight for Lifers -Inc is part of Reconstruction. Reconstruction has 3 parts to it. FFL's, L.E.A.D. the youth leadership aspect, then Alumni Ex-Offenders Association) The sentiment of unity between the movements to abolish the death penalty and life without parole was felt not only from the panel but also from people in the audience. A member of Murder Victims Against the Death Penalty – a man who lost his son – was in the audience and invited us to come to the annual anti-death penalty conference to bring our issues to their table. A woman Kim from Los Angeles was also in the audience with her family. She challenged the audience to think of juveniles who are caught up in gang violence as child soldiers. Kim said that the international community including the U.S. government tries to aid child soldiers, get them out of the wars they are caught up in, while here in this country we lock up teenage gangsters with no hope they can ever change. A women from the Sentencing Project asked about Restorative Justice programs in the prisons and we told her how the state had recently pulled all funding for those programs. Maura Taub said that she knew of no other groups in the country specifically tackling this issue and applauded our efforts.

Prison Poster Project

This epic art project is comprised of over 100 people in prison!! Initially, about 80 people answered questionnaires and then 25 or so folks have been artistically collaborating, - not to mention all my personal friends and acquaintance who have shared there lives and stories with me that i conjure up during the presentation. It's this crazy quilt of words and pictures by incarcerated people from all over the country. So it's a slide show of art mostly illustrated by prisoners and the narrators of the slide show read corresponding quotes from prisoners.

You all, we did a really good job producing the lecture that anyone can present! The slide show comes with a booklet. People who didn't know about prisons were moved, unnerved, and outraged. People who did thought it was a good educational tool. The discussions at the end of the presentations were enriching. I met a woman in Austin that worked with foster kids and went through the foster system herself. She talked about the connection between prisons and foster care. Like how a lot of kids are in foster care cuz their parents are in prison and then a lot of kids in foster care end up in prison...the cycle. She was really excited to share the poster project with her kids. In Chicago we met a friend whose mother worked at a prison in Indiana, a state prison shut down and reopened private. They started renting out the cells to other states whose systems were over crowded. Arizona had rented out many people to this private Indiana prison including 30 or so indigenous folks. The new prison was really strict and many of the spiritual and cultural needs of the indigenous folks were cut. One day the mom called home and said there was a riot in the prison and it was on fire! She said not to worry that she was in a safe room. The media incorrigibly reported that the riot was a race riot within the prison and did not address any of the legitimate complaints of the people in protest. Simultaneously frustrating and inspiring, eh? We also learned about how a friend was caught shop lifting at whole foods and his name was flagged because of his political activities and they were trying to sentence him to two years for petty theft. That was a bit unnerving to hear about.

(Continued on page 10)

Creative Interventions

Besides the workshops I helped with there were two that really introduced me to some new ideas and got me thinking a little different. The first Creative Interventions – they are a resource center to create and promote community base interventions for interpersonal violence: domestic violence, sexual abuse and family violence. The stories I remember from this was for domestic violence support for immigrants. The presenter spoke about how even the limited resources for survivors are not available to undocumented people or folks with a shakey immigration status. The status can be part of the abuse, confining people even more rigidly into their situations because their movement is restricted. They can't just go to another state, for example. The group operates mostly by word of mouth. If someone calls experiencing violence, they try to get them to come in with a support team. That could be one person or a whole family of people. This helps to facilitate the family/friends as primary support. If the person says they can't think of anyone they try to help think of at least one person. The most mind expanding concept from this work shop for me was that the group did not strictly advocate for the unhealthy couple to split up. They said sometimes the people really love each other and just have a horrible relationship. It wasn't anything they pushed. They just had it on the table for options and strategies to work through. I really thought that was great and it was new to me because i have really only ever thought on how to get people apart and out of situations rather than what was mentioned. Raise the fist for creative interventions for keeping it real with hard work of not relying on oppressive police and criminal justice systems to support survivors of violence!! www.creative-interventions.org

Excerpted from larger report – please write for entire article ATTN:CR10 Report c/o HRC FedUp! 5125 Penn Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15224



Pennsylvania represents at CR10

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist

Behind the scenes: The Prison Industrial Complex is stealing your jobs

By: Sistar! Ham'diya Mu

I tried to listen to the diatribe of the political opponents running for the presidency and no matter to how many cups of coffee or dark chocolate candy bars I eat just to keep up my energy to listen to the "how the shit spins" the buzz phrase that causes the most irritation is the "war on crime".

Most candidates seem to believe that unless they are going to war either on or with someone, they don't mean business. Isn't interesting that there is a "war on terrorism" and - don't forget - the "war on drugs" and the now "war on crime". Is it me - but, I see a pattern emerging.

Say, while we are warring our asses off why haven't I heard about a "war on poverty". I guess I was either nodding or too buzzed on caffeine? This "war on crime" which gets folks all up and gitty is very spurious at best.

There is another way to look at what's really happening and if it is in your best interest, in the long run. Do you know that while you were doing your everyday life the United States' government has militarized the police force? Just because you don't see tanks rolling in your neighborhood and camelflourged folks armed with M-16 standing on the corner like in third world countries don't mean that what you don't see isn't real! Nope we are stylishly sophisticated for the obvious. Our soldiers (I meant police) have Tech 9's and paddy wagons, but are militarized nonetheless which means the police budget much like the military budget must grow by leaps and bounds.

And interesting enough the prolific prison population seems to correspond, especially in economically challenged neighborhoods which is the perfect pipeline to the prisons and keeps those beds full. If that isn't enough there are laws on the books to judicate youth younger and younger for longer prison terms.

This is very big business especially with the economic collapse of rural farms and mills that used to pepper the rural countryside. Many of the communities are convinced by their political leadership that having a prison in their community is the way to go. Now there is development of private prisons that don't need the vote of the community, because of all the money to be made by big business. And you would be shocked to know who is investing in the prison system, so much for justice for all.

Prisons are a hot commodity on the Wall Street Stock Market. Businesses such as Goldman & Sach Co., Prudential Insurance Co. of America, Smith Barney Shearson, Inc., Merrill Lynch & Co., are among those competing to underwrite the prison construction with private, tax-exempt bonds where no voter approval is required (1). Hence the military-industrial complex infrastructure is born amid political rhetoric baptized with federal, state and local dollars - your tax dollars at work, do you feel safe yet? Well if you are the slightest bit sane you shouldn't because in a nutshell big business has found a nefarious way to profit off the welfare of the people and by no means is justice blind to this which means your chances to go to jail for even the smallest of offense is very high.

Of course you know that America imprisons more of its citizens than any other industrialized nation about over 2 million and growing. If you're an Afro-American male your chance of being incarcerated are 9 times higher than Caucasians. Caucasians comprise

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Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist

(Continued from page 11)

69% or higher of those arrested while Afro-America comprise 29% of arrest. Afro-Americans make up 13% of the overall population yet they are over 48% of the prison population! This is worst than the height of apartheid in South Africa! A new - fast growing - ethnic group in the prison population is the Latino community who are also experiencing ongoing economic challenges, as well.

One could ask, how is the Prison Industrial Complex and all the good folks who invest so much money in prisons get a return on their investment Good question. Beside the obvious employees of the prisons, once the prison is built, you have an amazing chattel work force at your disposal. Prison labor has been and are used for everything from medical experiments (yep they still do that), to building roads, houses, clothes, landscaping, phone operators, food service, and anything you could use them for at either no cost or pennies on the dollar. Like about 18 cents an hour which is super profitable to the big business. But it's a bite in the balls to civilian workers who are fighting to get a living wage, let alone having private industry and government contacts looking the other way using slave labor to meet its demands and this is all legal. The 13th Amendment states that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation. This was proposed January 31, 1865 and still going strong today. So yes, you can be utilized, exploited as a slave and its legal.

Which stands to reason; why should there be any legislation to reverse, especially when - now - it has become so damn profitable?

Well I will end this here, but just for now. In the coming issues there will be more points to ponder about the every growing prison industrial complex and the courageous activism to bring an end to this devious enterprise which is against the people and public safety in the long run. If you are interested in making a change in abolishing the prison industrial complex; or you're just concerned about how your tax dollars are spent; or you have either experienced incarceration first hand; or have family in lockdown; whatever your situation get involved. Check out the Human Rights Coalition.

The bottom line is that evil exist when good folks do nothing. Until then ALWAYS question authority.

Families Dare to Speak, Dare to Resist

If you are a family member, loved one, or friend of a prisoner and wish to submit an article detailing any negative experience that you've encountered with the state and county prisons and/or their guards just forward your article w/photo of your self to the HRC's Newsletter department for possible printing.

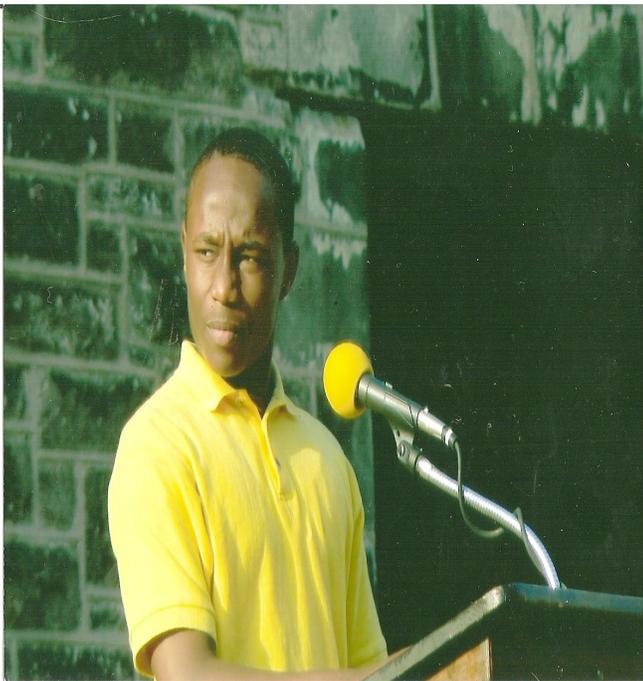
Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist

YOUTH LEADER SPEAKS OUT AGAINST ABUSE AND TORTURE OF LONG-TERM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND SMU PROGRAMS

Jamal Robinson, nephew of prisoner activist Jerome Coffey, is a 15 year-old community activist with the Youth Leadership Program of Families and Communities United (F.C.U.) and member of HRC-Philly. Here, Jamal delivered a fiery speech in front of the historic Eastern State Penitentiary located at 22nd and Fairmount Avenue of Philadelphia, calling for an end to the PA Department of Corrections (PA DOC) use of long-term solitary confinement and the SMU program while attending the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) STOP MAX Conference in 2008.

Jamal expressed a clear understanding of the economic, political, and social dynamics involved with prison issues, and had connected the man-made Poverty to Prisons Pipeline that youths from working-poor and poor communities are subjected to throughout America. Armed with the knowledge that poverty + no jobs + poor public schools + destruction of family units + violence + the U.S. government security agencies dumping drugs and guns in poor communities = prisons, drug addiction, suffering, and death. Jamal has called on the equal distribution of wealth

in America, an end to the so-called "War On Drugs", and the abolition of prisons.



Jamal has also called upon Pennsylvania's university/college student organizations to join the HRC in exposing the Human Rights abuses that are routinely taking place within the PA DOC's Solitary Confinement Units and SMU programs, and have called for the release of his uncle Jerome Coffey from long-term solitary confinement at SCI-Greene. Jamal stated that "We don't have to travel to Guantanamo Bay Prison in Cuba or Abu Gharib Prison in Iraq (both U.S. ran prisons) to confront the human abuses against prisoners, it can be found right here in Pennsylvania's state prison system, just travel to SCI-Camp Hill, SCI-Greene, and to the PA DOC central office in Camp Hill, PA who gives them all the green-light to pursue formal/informal policies of human abuse and torture, racism, and hostility towards prisoners and the families of prisoners."

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist

Yes We Can! Yes We Did!

I couldn't let this newsletter go out without mentioning that history was made this year and that I was a part of it. I can actually brag that I helped create this milestone in time by voting for the first Black President of the United States. I feel that I made a serious and profound contribution to world progress. Just like the people who fought in World War II and defeated Hitler, just like those who fought in the Civil War and freed the slaves, and just like those who can proudly say they supported Martin Luther King, Jr. and overcame segregation. Okay. I shouldn't try to take all the credit because we each had one vote and together we changed the world. WE can say we did it.

As an older Black woman through the years I've heard all the excuses like, the white man is holding a brother back or this is the white mans world or a Black brotha don't never get a break. But look what we got here, a Black man has learned the game. President Obama has set up the chess board and made some moves, lost a few pons, gained a queen. And beat the White man, this time, at his own game. He's living proof that we can learn the game. And if we really want to win (just like we did when we took over baseball, Jackie Robinson; basket ball, Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton; football, Charles "Doc" Baker; tennis, Arthur Ashe/Venus & Serena; golf, Tiger Woods) we can learn the game and, what? - touch down, that's what!

Some may say that Obama is like any other politician; I don't agree. But even if it turns out that he is and does nothing from this day forward, he has given us UNITY. I feel pride and comradeship when I think about how many people (Black, White, Puerto Rican, Asian, and prisoners) gave their one vote to Obama so that he could win this election and become our President. When the votes were counted and the election was won there was 150,000 people in Grant Park celebrating this victory and everyone there had tears of joy, cheers, hope and unity. He's the only President I know who's victory was celebrated across the world, Africa, Japan, England, and Germany. The opposition tried to separate us but we stood together and President Obama won with 56% of the vote. Admit it. Recognize. Our votes have changed the world. More than one million people were crowd into Washington, DC to witness first hand the inauguration of President Obama on a freezing January 20, 2009.

Now Obama is not going to turn the key and let everybody out of jail or abolish the prison system. But he's our ray of hope, our inspiration. He has made us see that if we stick together, stand up for what we believe, and not only talk the talk but walk the walk, it can be done. He don't walk on water, and he ain't the savior, but he is our Great Black Hope. Families of prisons unite. We can be a force to be dealt with. We did it once, we can do it again.

Families Dare to Speak, Dare to Resist.

Patricia Marshall Vickers

Prison Activist/Mother/Grandmother of Nine Black Males



Human Rights Coalition Report

THIS STRIKING INFORMATION IS PRINTED FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND PRISONERS WITHOUT COMPUTERS OR THE WEB. THIS ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED THROUGH WWW.INFORMATIONCLEARINGHOUSE.INFO. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE COMPUTERS, FEEL FREE TO VISIT THIS SITE FOR NEWS YOU WON'T FIND ON CNN. BECAUSE OF SIZE, WE WERE FORCED TO PRINT THIS ARTICLE IN TWO PARTS. PART II MAY BE FOUND IN THE APRIL-JUNE ISSUE OF 'THE MOVEMENT'.

Torture Inc. Americas Brutal Prisons

Savaged by dogs, Electrocuted With Cattle Prods, Burned By Toxic Chemicals, Does such barbaric abuse inside U.S. jails explain the horrors that were committed in Iraq?

By Deborah Davies

They are just some of the victims of wholesale torture taking place inside the U.S. prison system that we uncovered during a four-month investigation for BBC Channel 4. It's terrible to watch some of the videos and realise that you're not only seeing torture in action but, in the most extreme cases, you are witnessing young men dying.

The prison guards stand over their captives with electric cattle prods, stun guns, and dogs. Many of the prisoners have been ordered to strip naked. The guards are yelling abuse at them, ordering them to lie on the ground and crawl. 'Crawl, motherf****s, crawl.'

If a prisoner doesn't drop to the ground fast enough, a guard kicks him or stamps on his back. There's a high-pitched scream from one man as a dog clamps its teeth onto his lower leg.

Another prisoner has a broken ankle. He can't crawl fast enough so a guard jabs a stun gun onto his buttocks. The jolt of electricity zaps through his naked flesh and genitals. For hours afterwards his whole body shakes.

Lines of men are now slithering across the floor of the cellblock while the guards stand over them shouting, prodding and kicking.

Second by second, their humiliation is captured on a video camera by one of the guards.

The images of abuse and brutality he records are horrifyingly familiar. These were exactly the kind of pictures from inside Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad that shocked the world this time last year.

And they are similar, too, to the images of brutality against Iraqi prisoners that this week led to the conviction of three British soldiers.

But there is a difference. These prisoners are not caught up in a war zone. They are Americans, and the video comes from inside a prison in Texas

They are just some of the victims of wholesale torture taking place inside the U.S. prison system that we uncovered during a four-month investigation for Channel 4 that will be broadcast next week.

Our findings were not based on rumor or suspicion. They were based on solid evidence, chiefly videotapes that we collected from all over the U.S.

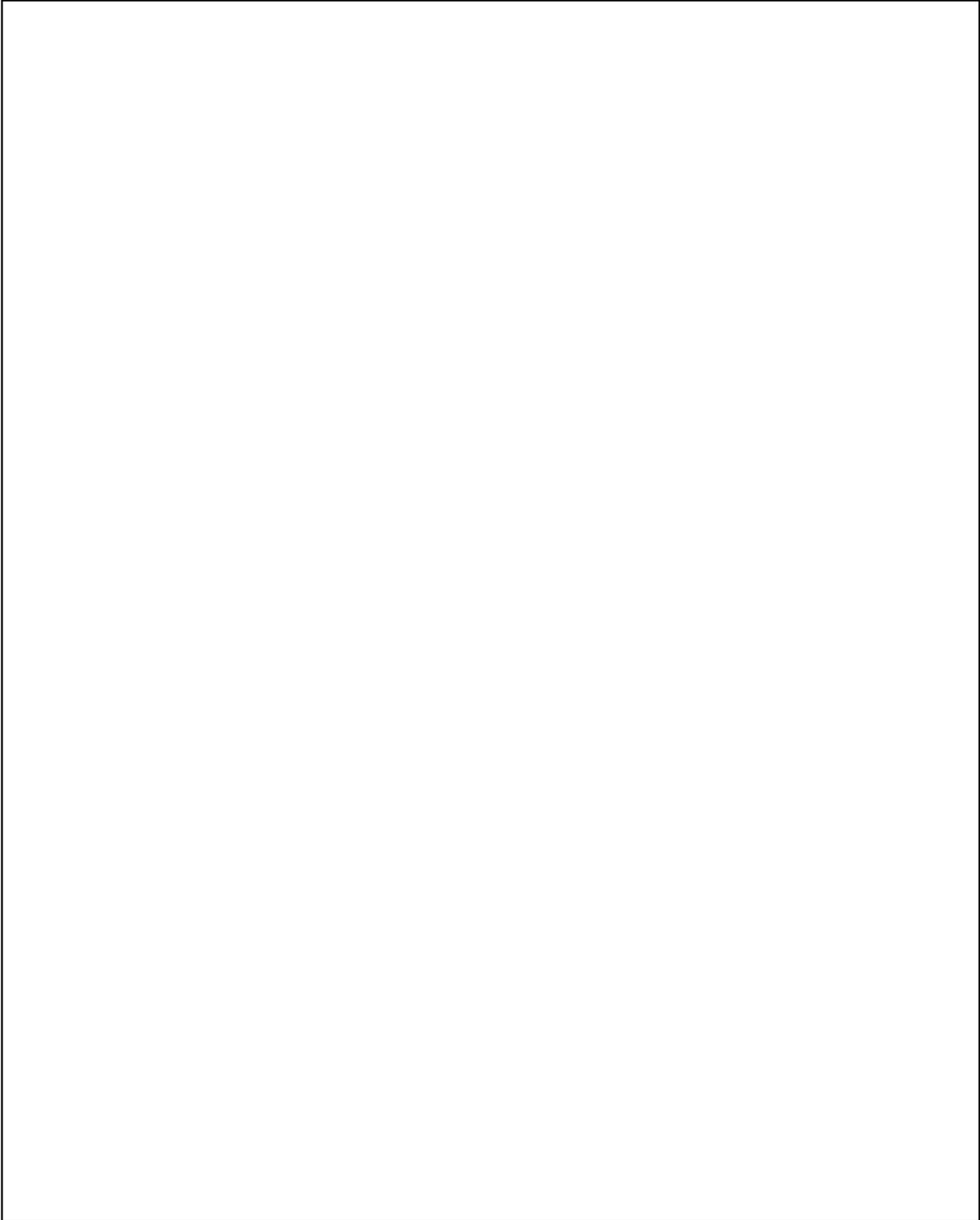
In many American states, prison regulations demand that any 'use of force operation', such as searching cells for drugs, must be filmed by a guard.

The theory is that the tapes will show proper procedure was followed and that no excessive force was used. In fact, many of them record the exact opposite.

Each tape provides a shocking insight into the reality of life inside the U.S. prison system – a reality that sits very uncomfortably with President Bush's commitment to the battle for freedom and democracy against the forces of tyranny and oppression.

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Human Rights Coalition Report

“Humans Not Animals”

By Christopher Allen Balmer

Pets are animals that are kept to be companions and to be given a care giver. Animals are creatures that have the ability to roam freely, be placed in captivity, become subject to scientific experiments, to be caged up and in growing cases beaten by their care givers.

Correctional officers of the Pennsylvania Prison System manage to treat us in the same manner as animals. We go through treatments that if seen by another authority would be considered cruel and unusual punishment. For example in the 1980's the FDA allowed drug testing on prisoners. The Federal Government wanted to ban all biomedical research in prisons in 1981. But a lawsuit imposed by prisoners stopped the regulation from being implemented and drug research in prisons from continuing.

PHASE I: The first phase encompasses studies with very small amounts of a drug on a limited amount of healthy people. Company employees, medical, school personnel, prisoners, and others who volunteered for such trials. At this stage the researchers are primarily interested in learning how their drug is absorbed and excreted in healthy people. And what side affects it may have once consumed in the human body.

This example above proves my point in saying that we as prisoners are subject to scientific experiments the same way animals are subject to, as well. Prisoners are caged up most of the time in certain housing units such as the RHU, SMU, and SSNU. We are only given one hour of outside recreation a day. Meanwhile we are left with nothing but loneliness. Consequently, most of these housing units are used as punishments to belittle inmates. The conditions of these units are based solely around management.

To most prison employees we are low in standard and do not deserve to be treated good. A label is placed on us like cattle in a ranch to help our owners tell the difference between who is who. WHAT NEEDS TO BE EXPRESSED MOSTLY IS PRISONERS ARE HUMAN BEINGS THE SAME AS THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS THAT WATCH OVER PRISONERS, EVERYDAY!!!!

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/398828_juviewsentences05.html

A look at why state teens can get life without parole

Thursday, February 5, 2009

Last updated 12:03 a.m. PT

By **CLAUDIA ROWE**
P-I REPORTER

Despite its liberal reputation, Washington is among only six states that have sentenced kids as young as 13 to life in prison without any possibility of parole.

Moreover, 28 older teens given similar sentences often had lawyers who were later disbarred, suspended or censured. Others facing life stood before judges or prosecutors reprimanded for misconduct and errors. None of their cases has been retried.

These findings are among many detailed in a new report by Columbia Legal Services that outlines the reality for youths tried as adults in Washington courts and makes several recommendations for reform.

Topping the list is a ban on life sentences for adolescent offenders.

"It raises really serious questions about fairness when you look at these 28 cases and you see that much going wrong," said Elizabeth Calvin, a former youth attorney here who now works for Human Rights Watch. Columbia's data on poor legal representation and racially skewed sentencing particularly alarmed her.

"It's especially troubling, given the fact that you're talking about teenagers," she said.

From 1999 to 2007, more than 1,550 Washington children were tried and sentenced as adults, the majority for robbery and assault charges, according to data from the Sentencing Guidelines Commission.

But there are also kids like Jonathan Newman, who was 15 when he shot and killed Craig Hoffman, a father of four, during a White Center burglary in October 2007. Prosecutors argued that the adult court system would not be too harsh for the boy, though they acknowledged that he had suffered trauma and a rocky home life.

A judge sentenced him to 19 years.

Much of Columbia's study was spurred by recent science showing that young peoples' still-developing brains have anatomical differences preventing them from assessing risk, controlling impulsive behavior or engaging in moral reasoning the way an adult would.

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court found this research compelling enough to use it when prohibiting the death penalty for any offender under 18.

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Human Rights Coalition Report

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"From a moral standpoint, it would be misguided to equate the failings of a minor with those of an adult, for a greater possibility exists that a minor's character deficiencies will be reformed," Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote.

For that reason, Rep. Mary Helen Roberts, D-Edmonds, has joined lawmakers in California , Michigan , Florida , Louisiana and Nebraska in proposing legislation that would do away with life imprisonment for any youth under 17.

"I think when there's new information on the table, we need to take that to heart," she said. "And I think that data argues against past practices for how we have treated some juveniles in our criminal justice system."

Yet in many cases, Washington still treats teenage offenders as if they were adults. If a 16- or 17-year-old commits a violent crime, he or she is automatically sent into adult court without regard for any potential history of trauma, mental illness or developmental delay. Nor may judges in such cases consider whether that youth might be better served in the juvenile system, which has a greater emphasis on rehabilitation.

"We should change the name of the Department of Corrections to the Department of Punishment and Retribution," Roberts said. "We have to decide as a society how much we're willing to invest in punishment and revenge before we start recognizing where we can best spend our money."

Former Justice Bobbe Bridge, who served in juvenile, superior and state Supreme Court, agrees.

"This is not just suppositions about brain development. It's neurological evidence that teenagers' brains are wired differently," she said. "How can that not require us, as honest and fair decision-makers, to reconsider whether we've made the right policy choice?"

Across the country, other judges are beginning to feel the same. Nevada 's state Supreme Court recently struck down a 13-year-old's life-without-parole sentence, saying it created a "denial of hope" and removed any motivation for the boy to improve his character or behavior.

But Ian Goodhew, deputy chief of staff in the King County Prosecutor's Office who has handled dozens of cases involving teenagers, believes there are sound reasons for keeping the option of a most-severe life sentence.

"There is only one way a juvenile gets life without parole -- you commit aggravated first-degree murder. And there's no more heinous crime," he said. "Should we have a blanket rule that says no life-without-parole for anyone under 18? No, I think there should be discretion as to whether someone 15, 16 or 17 should face life. We're talking about the worst crime that can possibly be committed."

Beyond debate over life terms for teens, the "Just Treatment for Youth" report raises questions about racial imbalance -- noting that when Washington judges are permitted to decide, black teens have received adult sentences at nearly three times their proportion of the population. It also points out that scientists are beginning to suggest that handling youth as adults actually increases violence. Robert Hahn, an investigator with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, found "strong evidence" that juveniles doing time in the adult system were 34 percent more likely to commit violent crimes once released than those kept in juvenile facilities.

Currently, teens sentenced to adult time in Washington stay in locked, juvenile halls until they are 18, though when necessary they are moved into adult prison and kept in solitary confinement for protection.

P-I reporter Claudia Rowe can be reached at 206-448-8320 or claudiarowe@seattlepi.com.

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What's The News!

Prisoner Awarded \$185,000 in Lawsuit Against DOC Staff

Andre Jacobs, a captive of SCI Fayette in the PA DOC, was awarded \$185,000 in compensatory damages by a jury today for violations of his constitutional rights while being held in the Long Term Segregation Unit in SCI Pittsburgh in 2003.

Andre represented himself at trial, and prevailed despite being forced to wear a remote-controlled electro-shock stun belt throughout that was controlled by DOC staff. Two of Andre's witnesses testified to Judge Conti that prison guards working the Special Management Unit (SMU) in Camp Hill threatened them for their participation in the case, with both testifying that C/O Uler assaulted one of the witnesses.

In the first of three upcoming jury trials (the other two are scheduled for January and February) in Federal Court, Mr. Jacobs out-lawyered the state's attorneys throughout, eventually winning guilty verdicts against Lt. Gregory Giddens, ex-Captain Thomas McConnel, and Superintendent's Assistant Carol Scire.

Check the Post-Gazette for an article: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08329/930437-100.stm> And don't believe the hype: Andre never broke the hand of a federal marshal, but rather was beaten unconscious by federal marshalls while in cuffs and shackles after he violated a direct order not to speak by having the criminal audacity to tell his grandmother, Elizabeth, that he loved her. To cover up their criminal assault they charged Andre with assault under federal statutes.

Philly Police Frames Innocent Man For drugs

Thomas Cooper, 31, a North Philly native, who faced life in prison on drug charges is poised to walk free in the wake of a media exposé that raised questions about the cop and informant linked to his arrest. The government has concluded that dismissal of Cooper's case is in the interests of justice. The case, dismissed by U.S. District Judge Cynthia M. Rufe, was the first to be thrown out since allegations arose that Officer Jeffrey Cujdik and his longtime informant, Ventura Martinez, lied about drug buys of hundreds of criminal cases so Cujdik could obtain search warrants for targeted houses and people. Thomas Cooper had faced a mandatory federal life sentence. Now corrupt Officer Jeffrey Cujdik faces prison time.

PA DOC Violates Families' constitutional Rights in Search of Vehicle When Visiting.

In regards to the PA DOC searching visitors' cars and other possessions without probable cause or a warrant as stated by the constitutions and telling them that if the don't consent, they cannot visit, I was told that it is coercion. Thus, violating the Constitutions of Pennsylvania and the United States (State/federal). The law is: 385 U.S. 493, 495-500. It also violates the 4th and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, and article I, section 8 of the PA Constitution.

The PA DOC attempts to justify their illegal actions by saying they must maintain security and a drug free institution and that visiting is a privilege. But, if someone refuses a search and leaves voluntarily, they have further sanctions placed on their visiting privileges. They are assumed guilty if they refuse a search. Hey isn't PA DOC property owned with the taxpayers money? I think this is an issue that we need to address.

Donna Pfender (President-fight For lifers West)

HRC Note - Even though the PA DOC claims that visits are a privilege and that they conduct the searches of visitors' vehicles to maintain security and a drug free institution, they cannot violate visitors' constitutional rights in doing so. Thus, searches of visitors' vehicles cannot be done without probable cause and a warrant, and consent of a search of vehicle cannot be coerced by PA DOC officials. Prisoners cannot challenge this in court. This issue can only be challenged in court by the visitors who claim their constitutional rights were violated by the PA DOC and it should be done as a class action civil lawsuit in the State or Federal Courts.

Two PA Judges Admit Selling Their Offices

Two PA Judges plead guilty to corruption and fraud charges for taking \$2.6 million in kickbacks in return for putting juvenile offenders in detention prisons operated by PA Child care and Western PA child Care LLC.

On February 15, 2009 Luzerne County President Judge Mark Ciavarella and Senior Judge Michael Conahan received 7 years in Federal prison for criminally placing juveniles in prison from 2003 to 2007.

PA DOC Continues to Deny Nation of Islam Members Religious Services at State Correctional Institutes

For the past 15 years, the Nation of Islam religious group have been subjected to religious persecution and the suppression of their religious services at the majority of State Correctional Institutions throughout the PA DOC. Twenty-six out of twenty-eight continue to deny Nation of Islam religious services for no justifiable legal reason, although all SCIs have allowed religious services for Christians, Catholics, Jewish, Orthodox Islam, and Native Americans religious groups.

Civil lawsuits by members of the nation of Islam against the PA DOC for denying religious services have been constant over the past fifteen years, see legal cases: Allah v. Menei, (E.D. PA. 1994); Scott v Horn, (E.D. PA. 1998); Sutton v. Rasheed (C.A. 3, (PA) 2003); Allah v Al-Hafeez, (E.D. PA. 2002).

Class action civil lawsuits are currently being pursued by Nation of Islam members against SCI-Mahanoy, SCI-Houtzdale, SCI-Forest, SCI-Fayette, and other SCIs under the legal grounds of religious discrimination and equal protection for the denial of NOI religious services.

HRC-Fed Up! Blast PA DOC/SCI-Camp Hill for Torture in SMU

Bret-Grote, an investigator for the Human Rights Coalition-FedUp! based out of Pittsburgh, PA has asked Governor Ed Rendell to conduct an investigation into complaints made by prisoners and their families on the abuses and torture by corrections officers at SCI-Camp Hill's SMU. A group called the Anarchist Black Cross Paralegal Services in Texas has also called for an investigation of the SMU at SCI-Camp Hill. Several groups are calling the SMU at SCI-Camp Hill a torture chamber where prisoners are routinely denied food, showers, exercise periods, and are subjected to beatings, death threats, cell lights on 24 hours, frigid cold cells year round, harassment, manufactured misconduct reports, cell extractions, and continued indefinite solitary confinement. The Human Rights Coalition, Pennsylvania Prison Society, Fight For Lifers, and PA Institutional Law Project all think the SMU is not a viable program and constitutes human rights abuse and torture by the Pennsylvania Department of Correction.

Gov. Rendell Wants No Parole for Repeat Violent Offenders

Currently, in the state of Pennsylvania, offenders are given indeterminate sentences requiring a minimum and maximum time to be served. Gov. Rendell proposes that any adult or juvenile convicted of a violent crime with a deadly weapon would be unable to get out on parole.* He has told the General Assembly to start working on this legislation. He cited the case of several men on parole who have been accused of allegedly shooting and killing Philly police officers.

Gov. Rendell states that the sentencing guidelines for crimes wouldn't change but judges would give offenders a sentence to be served fully, no time off for good behavior. He states that the prison system, already overcrowded, will see an increase due to the legislation but that non-violent offenders would be fast tracked out of the state prison system. He says he believes the state prisons are for violent offenders, and that the state is working on building additional prisons for the expected increase.

*HRC Note - Such legislation does not bode well for those whom advocate "Parole for Child Lifers".

What's The News!

Just wanted to bring this piece of history to your attention; we can and did make a difference even behind prison walls, thanks to Malissa Gamble a.k.a. Miss Voters Registration 2008. Miss Gamble went into the prisons and enlightened those who didn't know their rights. She encouraged them to register and - to take it one step further - to actually vote. She guarded those votes and insured that they were counted. And guess what, comrades - you guys did it. You... we, played our part in voting into office our first Black President. Read about Malissa Gamble, our brothers and sisters behind prison walls, and become aware of your rights as reported in Philadelphia Daily News, below.



MALISSA GAMBLE, MISS VOTER REGISTRATION

By Ronnie Polaneczky
Philadelphia Daily News
Daily News Columnist

AND NOW, in time for Election Day on Tuesday, I give you Malissa Gamble, Miss Voter Registration 2008.

OK, so that's not a real title. But Gamble deserves a tiara nonetheless for helping to register 2,000 new voters this year.

And get this: All 2,000 are either prison inmates or ex-offenders.

"It might be even more than two thousand," says Gamble, a self-described "PIL" - previously incarcerated lady - and founder of a Philly-based nonprofit group called The Time Is Now to Make a Change, which helps prisoners and ex-offenders learn their voting rights.

(Continued on page 23)

What's The News!

(Continued from page 22)

"This has been a really exciting year. Everyone is interested in this election. They can't wait to be part of it."

I've never worked the innards of a big campaign, but I doubt that pollsters have ever thought of cell blocks as voting blocs. If not, it could be that, like a lot of people, they're under the impression that inmates and ex-cons aren't eligible to vote. In many cases, they'd be wrong.

Voting eligibility of the convicted varies from state to state. In liberal Maine and Vermont, for example, the right to vote is untouchable. Whether they're awaiting trial, in prison, on parole or back at home, Maine-ians and Vermonters retain their right to cast a ballot.

Not so in Virginia and Kentucky, where convicted felons may never again vote (unless given special permission from the governor).

Pennsylvania's restrictions fall somewhere in the middle.

An arrestee keeps his right to vote until sentencing, even if he's incarcerated. Once imprisoned after sentencing, he may still vote if his conviction was a misdemeanor. If it was a felony, he may not vote, but the right is restored when he leaves prison, even if he's on probation or parole.

The latter is a fairly recent phenomenon. Convicted felons in Pennsylvania once had to wait five years after release before they could vote again.

A 2000 lawsuit succeeded in overturning that prohibition. But "not everybody knows that, so there's still confusion" about prisoner voting rights, says Malik Aziz, head of the Ex-Offender Association of Pennsylvania and the lawsuit's lead plaintiff.

"Offenders wrongly think that once they screw up, they lose their right to vote forever," says Aziz, whose organization incorporates voter education and registration in its prisoner re-entry services. "We teach them the truth about the law and let them know that their vote is their voice. Voting is a way back into being a responsible member of the community."

Aziz is featured in *Voting in America*, a collection of nine short documentaries "about why some people don't vote and how others are trying to change their minds."

Aziz is shown explaining to Philly inmates the value of the voting process and how it will connect them to the communities they will one day re-enter.

The way the men listen, with both hunger and rapt attention, can make you appreciate all over again the everyday dignity of the voting process.

"No one ever explained it like this before," says one awed-looking young guy who promises to pass the knowledge on to his kin when he returns home.

The Philadelphia Prison System is one of the country's most forward-thinking when it comes to voter education, says Aurora Vasquez, an attorney for the Advancement Project, which advocates for voter education in prisons nationwide.

"During the last mayoral campaign, Philadelphia even sponsored a candidate's night at the prison, so inmates could meet the candidates directly," she said. "I've never heard of that being done anywhere."

How did I miss that photo op?

It's all part of an effort to keep the election process similar to the outside world's, says Prison Commissioner Louis Giorla.

"We want to make it as standard and authentic as what a citizen would encounter in the community," he says.

While the prison doesn't directly handle voter registration - "We don't want to be seen as trying to influence voting in any way," says Giorla - it arranges for outside groups like Malissa Gamble's to help inmates determine their voting eligibility, complete registration forms and apply for absentee ballots.

Given that Philly's annual prison admissions hover near 35,000, with an average daily rate of 9,600, that can add up to many new voters in a given year.

"The first time I voted, after I got out of prison, felt wonderful," says Gamble.

Thanks to her, on Tuesday 2,000 people will get to feel the same thing.

**Human Rights Coalition -
Philadelphia Chapter**

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4134 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19147
(215) 387-6155

www.hrcoalition.org

**Human Rights Coalition -
Chester Chapter**

Box 31
Chester, PA 19013
(215) 474-7472

hrcchester@yahoo.com

**Human Rights Coalition - FedUp!
Chapter**

5125 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224
412-361-3022 xt.4

hrcfedup@gmail.com
www.thomasmertoncenter.org/fedup/

Official HRC Chapters

START A HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION (HRC) CHAPTER OR BRANCH IN YOUR AREA. Each Chapter or Branch must comply with eight requirements. These eight are:

- 1.) Respond to inquiries in a timely manner as resources permit.
- 2.) Update membership to HRC-Philly at least quarterly.
- 3.) Incorporate as a non-profit organization.
- 4.) Publish a newsletter at least semi annually as resources permit.
- 5.) Send minutes of chapter meetings to HRC-Philly.
- 6.) Establish internet video conferencing for statewide chapter meetings.
- 7.) Create a cooperative business to finance your chapter or branch to be financially independent.

The Human Rights Coalition (Disclaimer)

The Human Rights Coalition is an organization that focuses on the plight of prisoners in their struggle for human rights and humane conditions of prisons and challenging the prison industrial complex exploitation of inmates and the drastic ramification on the families of prisoners and society at large.

We recognize that most prisoners are people of color and often are economically disfranchised working class people. HRC serves as an educational and resource forum to the community.

The Human Rights Coalition does not have the ability to represent individuals in the court of law nor has funding for such activities. The Human Rights Coalition does not have lawyers for personal counsel nor the ability to write legal briefs on behalf of any individual.

The Human Rights Coalition is about building a grassroots movement with the leadership of the families of prisoners and citizens who are concerned about the proliferation of prisons and the lack of social programs that could prevent crime and injustice.

"We can bomb the world into pieces but, you can't bomb it into peace"

The Babylon System -

Bab.y.lon - noun, Etymology: Babylon, ancient city of Babylonia, 14th century, a city devoted to materialism and sensual pleasure, many liken Babylon to the United States, see Revelations 17-18.

If any prisoner, family member, or community activist would like to submit an article that is "critical" of the state and county prison systems, courts, D.A. offices, police, capitalist corporate America, and the government, just forward your article to the HRC's Newsletter Department for possible printing.

Mumia Abu-Jamal

faces US Supreme Court, as supporters mobilize globally

By Hans Bennett

Abu-Jamal-News.com

On Friday, December 19, 2008, death-row journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal filed his appeal to the US Supreme Court, asking it to consider his case for a new guilt-phase trial. One month before, the Philadelphia District Attorney filed its separate appeal to the US Supreme Court asking to have Abu-Jamal executed without a new sentencing-phase trial.

At this critical stage in Abu-Jamal's case, supporters organized a week of global solidarity actions that began on December 6, the day of the large protest in Philadelphia, almost 27 years after Abu-Jamal was arrested for the December 9, 1981 shooting death of white police officer Daniel Faulkner, and later convicted in a 1982 trial that Amnesty International has declared a "violation of minimum international standards that govern fair trial procedures and the use of the death penalty".

There were solidarity actions inside the US and around the world, including Mexico, Venezuela, Germany, France, England, Switzerland. Several US events screened the new DVD video titled *Fighting for Mumia's Freedom: a report from Philadelphia*.

In Philadelphia, over 200 protesters gathered outside the District Attorney's office across the street from City Hall. *Journalists for Mumia's* new video report from the demonstration features an interview with persecuted Civil Rights Lawyer Lynne Stewart, and footage of Pam Africa speaking outside the DA's office about the newly discovered crime scene photos taken by press photographer Pedro Polakoff, and the DA's role in hiding them from the defense. The coordinator of the *International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal*, Pam Africa cited Polakoff's statements today that he approached the DA's office with the photos in 1981/82 and 1995, but was completely ignored by them. Subsequently, Polakoff's photos were never seen by the 1982 jury, or by the defense. Africa presented the evidence to Philadelphia PD Civil Affairs Captain William Fisher to deliver to DA Lynne Abraham.

Protesters marched from the DA's office to the Federal Court Building where Abu-Jamal had oral arguments on May 17, 2007. The march stopped at the 13th and Locust crime scene where *Journalists for Mumia* gave a presentation focusing on the photo by Polakoff that shows a blank space where key prosecution witness



Mumia Abu-Jamal

(Continued from page 25)

Robert Chobert testified to being parked in his taxi as he allegedly observed Abu-Jamal shoot Faulkner. An online video of the presentation is available alongside the special presentation flyer.

That week, *Journalists for Mumia* was featured by Philadelphia's independent news website GeoClan.com. I argued in the interview that "those advocating Mumia's execution show a disturbing lack of concern about the undeniable problems of racism (and all documented police / DA / judicial misconduct) throughout. At the most fundamental level, the 'Fry Mumia' campaign's lack of concern is racist. . . . The FOP is appealing to a racist lynch mob mentality that has long infected the US, so calling this a 'legal lynching' is no exaggeration."

In Mexico City, Mexico, supporters organized a week of actions, including a protest rally outside the US Embassy. Linking Mumia's case to repression and political prisoners in Mexico, speakers at the US Embassy included ex-Atenco prisoners Edith Rosales and César del Valle, as well as a guitar performance by Atenco survivor Jorge Salinas, whose arms were temporarily paralyzed and hands fractured when he was almost killed by police at Atenco. Survivors Mariana, Edith y Norma who courageously told their story of being raped at Atenco. Solidarity statements were read from Mexican political prisoners Gloria Arenas Agis and her husband Jacobo Silva Nogales, and from the Atenco political prisoners in the Molino de Flores prison at Texcoco, México.

Braulio Alvarez, a member of the Venezuelan parliament and leader of the farmers struggle in Venezuela said in his message written for the week, that Venezuelan supporters had decided "to go the American embassy in Caracas to hand to the ambassador a letter to the governor of Pennsylvania, demanding that he immediately liberate Mumia Abu-Jamal."

Berlin, Germany's, week of solidarity culminated in a demonstration where hundreds marched to the US Embassy with slogans like "Freiheit für Mumia Abu-Jamal - Weg mit der Todesstrafe überall!" ("Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal - Abolish the death penalty everywhere").

Also demonstrating the international interest in this case, the new British documentary film about Abu-Jamal, titled *In Prison My Whole Life*, premiered December 8 on the Sundance Channel. Previous interviews with William Francome, and Livia Giuggioli Firth, revealed that *In Prison* features an interview with Abu-Jamal's brother Billy Cook, and the newly discovered crime scene photos. Officially endorsed by *Amnesty International*, Amnesty UK Director Kate Allen said: "We hope that the film's viewers will back our call for a fair retrial for Mumia Abu-Jamal—and also support our work opposing the death penalty in the US and around the world."

Appealing to the US Supreme Court

Both the DA and Abu-Jamal are asking the US Supreme Court to consider their appeals of the March 27, 2008 rulings by the US Third Circuit Court, when the court denied Abu-Jamal a new guilt-phase trial but ruled that there must be a new sentencing-phase trial if the DA still wants the death penalty. Therefore, Abu-Jamal is appealing for a new guilt-phase trial, while the DA is appealing to execute him without a new sentencing-phase trial. On October 6, 2008, the US Supreme Court rejected an unrelated appeal from Abu-Jamal.

On March 27, 2008 the US Third Circuit Court's three-judge panel of Thomas Ambro, Anthony Scirica, and Robert Cowen ruled against three different appeal issues, refusing to grant either a new guilt-phase trial or a preliminary hearing that could have led to a new guilt-phase trial for Abu-Jamal. However, on the issue of racist jury selection, also known as the Batson claim, the three judge panel of split 2-1, with Ambro dissenting.

Abu-Jamal filed his appeal of this ruling with the US Supreme Court today, Dec. 19. Arguably the key issue will be the 1986 *Batson v. Kentucky* ruling established the right to a new trial if jurors were excluded on the basis of race. At the 1982 trial Prosecutor McGill used 10-11 of his 15 peremptory strikes to remove otherwise acceptable black jurors, yet the court ruled that there was not even the appearance of discrimination. In his dissenting opinion, Judge Ambro wrote that the denial of a preliminary *Batson* hearing "goes against the grain of our prior actions. . . I see no reason why we should not afford Abu-Jamal the courtesy of our precedents."

Separately, the DA is appealing to execute without a new sentencing-phase trial, having filed their brief on November 14, 2008. Abu-Jamal's deadline to respond to this is January 21, 2009.

(Continued on page 27)

Mumia Abu-Jamal

(Continued from page 26)

On March 27, the three-judge panel unanimously affirmed Federal District Court Judge William Yohn's 2001 decision "overturning" the death sentence. Citing the 1988 Mills v. Maryland precedent, Yohn had ruled that sentencing forms used by jurors and Judge Sabo's instructions to the jury were potentially confusing, and jurors could have mistakenly believed that they had to unanimously agree on any mitigating circumstances in order to consider them as weighing against a death sentence.

According to this ruling, if the DA wants to re-instate the death sentence, the DA must call for a new penalty-phase jury trial where new evidence of Mumia's innocence can be presented. However, the jury can only choose between a sentence of life in prison without parole or a death sentence.

The DA is appealing this 2001/2008 ruling to the US Supreme Court, so if the court agrees to consider the DA's appeal and rules in their favor, Mumia can then be executed without benefit of the new sentencing trial. However, if the court upholds the 2001 and 2008 rulings, then the DA will either request a new sentencing trial or accept life in prison without the chance of parole.

Notably, at the DA's request, during the post-2001 appeals, Mumia has never left his death row cell or been given general population "privileges" such as contact visits with family.

Reacting to the DA's Appeal

Following news that the DA was appealing to execute without a new sentencing trial, I spoke with Dave Lindorff, J. Patrick O'Connor, and William Francome.

Dave Lindorff is the author of *Killing Time: An investigation into the death row case of Mumia Abu-Jamal*. He says that "the obsession of a string of Philadelphia district attorneys, beginning with current Governor Ed Rendell and ending with current DA Lynn Abraham with killing Mumia Abu-Jamal, despite his now having spent 26 years in the living hell of Pennsylvania's death row, is truly repulsive and inhuman. It has ruined the lives of Daniel Faulkner's widow whose life has become a pathetic campaign of vengeance. It has cost the taxpayers of Philadelphia and of the state of Pennsylvania untold millions of dollars. And meanwhile, there is every reason to believe that Abu-Jamal was wrongly convicted of first degree murder and should never have been sentenced to death in the first place. The obsession to kill him, which began from the moment police first arrived on the scene in December, 1981, has led to a decades long travesty of and insult to the principles of justice, which is continuing to this day."

William Francome, from the British film *In Prison My Whole Life* says that this "shows again the political nature of this case. It is my opinion that their office would not like to have to go through with another sentencing phase of the trial, with the attention that it would receive. They wish that this case would just disappear and that Mumia would be quiet, yet they do not want to face the Fraternal Order of Police who would be outraged if the DA wasn't pushing for a death sentence. . . The sad thing is that amongst the political battles, a man's life is at stake and I find the attempt at reinstating the death sentence (which is a completely irreversible and inhumane practice), to be abhorrent."

J. Patrick O'Connor is the author of "The Framing of Mumia Abu-Jamal." Despite several book tours and an important NY Times article when *Framing* was released in May 2008, it has been virtually ignored by the mainstream media. O'Connor argues that the DA's appeal is "without merit and represents pure gamesmanship by outgoing D.A. Lynne Abraham. . . The last thing the Philadelphia DA's Office wants to conduct is a new sentencing hearing, an event it continues to put off by filing this latest appeal. That's really what this latest appeal is all about."

The Power of the People

At the December 6 protest, Pam Africa stressed that the DA is trying to execute Abu-Jamal despite the strong evidence of both an unfair trial and innocence. Not having any faith in the court system, she argued that justice will only come from popular pressure, and made an urgent plea for supporters to do all they can at this critical hour. In his message recorded for the international week of solidarity, Abu-Jamal thanked his supporters and decried the recent denial of a new guilt-phase trial: "As you've seen, the law is but politics by other means, and the judges but politicians in judges' robes. It doesn't matter what the cases say. It doesn't matter what the so-called rules say. They've never followed them from day one. What matters is what you say. What matters is what you do. So I thank you all for being there, for fighting for what's right, for fighting for life, for fighting for liberty. I thank you all and I love you all."

When The Judicial System Goes Wild! Justice Denied

By: Bro. Eric "Man Shareff" Riddick

For the last ten to fifteen years, society have been bombarded with T.V. shows of entertainment with titles such as, "When Girls Go Wild"; "When Animals Go Wild", etc. These shows depicts animals and people going out of control, either in rage or in some type of sexual frenzy. These T.V. shows receive very high ratings, indicating that a significant number of people in society enjoy such entertainment. Even I have found myself tuning in on occasions. However, let us seriously think about what would happen if a system that posses the governmentally empowered duties to dispense justice goes wild? This is the topic of this writing --- "WHEN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEMS GOES WILD"!

There are three branches of government in the U.S.A. and they are: legislative, executive and judicial. The basic duty of the judicial system is to dispense justice in an orderly manner. When this very important system goes wild or out of control, JUSTICE IS DENIED! And lives are systematically displaced and/or destroyed. The noble aspects of justice become a casualty. Equality becomes molested, and freedom becomes apprehended mendaciously!

When a essential pillar of a society, such as the judicial system, goes wild (i.e. begins to function in opposition to its naturally intendant motive of operations, [justice]), the men and women of that society become targets of rogue repressive policies, resulting in innocent people being convicted of crimes that they did not do. Families are arbitrarily torn apart. The judicial system literally becomes a weapon of mass destruction, rapaciously causing more devastation than the two U.S. atom bombs that was perniciously dropped on Japan in 1945. The only difference is that this out of control judicial system deceptively operates beyond a well thought out camouflage nefarious mask of pseudo law and order! TERRORISM IN ITS MOST COMPLEX FORM!!

When the judicial system goes wild or out of control, there are no guns involved. Nor is it a disorganized assault of freedom, justice and equality. It is injustice via gross/criminal prosecution misconduct, perpetual ineffective legal assistance by so-called lawyers, abuse of discretion/power by presiding judges, all of which operates with complicity, in total disregards towards the integrity of their respective professions in which the American people entrusted upon them.

The world has witness in the past 10+ years, many people exonerated from wrongful conviction, mainly by way of DNA evidence. However, the DNA exonerations are just vivid indicators of many other wrongful convictions that never get redressed because of the many unconstitutional uncivilized impediments that have been insidiously constructed by those who profit from the policies of unjust human warehousing, which restricts litigants from petitioning the government for due redress. Statues created to systemically circumvent/sabotage litigant's constitutional rights.

How can there be time limitations on proving innocence? One clandestine method that is used to derail the attempts by the innocent method that is used to detail the attempts by the innocent to rectify their wrongful conviction is the courts appointing a lawyer to represent the litigant --- however, said lawyer, who's actually (99.9% of the time) an undercover state prosecutor, renders so much ineffectiveness, that the litigant never get his issues properly addressed. This is state sponsored terrorism.

How do I know that the judicial system has gone wild? Well, I personally know of said injustice because I bear the scars of this modern day repressive judicial system! For 17+ years, I have been submerged in the polluted valley of unjust incarceration for a crime that every aspect of the facts proves my innocence!

(Continued on page 29)

The Babylon System -

Bab.y.lon - noun, Etymology: Babylon, ancient city of Babylonia, 14th century, a city devoted to materialism and sensual pleasure, many liken Babylon to the United States, see Revelations 17-18.

(Continued from page 28)

I went in front of this system gone wild and because I didn't have dream team green (unlimited finances) like O.J. nor did I have the complexion for the connection and protection, I was orderly lynched and sentence to life in prison. In closing, all that I stated in this writing can be easily proven. The gravity of truth speaks loud and clear for those who are listening. However, if we, as a people are mesmerized by T.V. shows like girls gone wild, or animals gone wild – we won't realize that the judicial system has gone wild and a multitude of lives are being destroyed un-noticed. WE MUST RESIST THE URGE OF STANDING ON THE SIDE LINE AS SPECTATOR OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ALL FORMS OF INJUSTICE AND GET INVOLVED! WE THE PEOPLE MUST BECOME POLITICALLY CONSCIOUS AND AWARE OF WHAT THE GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS ARE DOING TO ITS PEOPLE! TODAY, THE PEOPLE MUST UNITE! THESE ARE THE DAYS OF CHANGE. FORWARD!!!

Attention! Families of Prisoners!

The HRC is looking for a few good men and women to join our ranks as members or volunteers in order to advance our righteous cause of Freedom and human rights for all!

We are looking for people willing to be activists in our movement and wants to be directly involved in doing the following activities:

- HELP RALLY TO MAKE A CHANGE BY ORGANIZING AND PARTICIPATING IN PROTEST RALLIES.
- HELP CONDUCT COMMUNITY MEETINGS FOR OUR CAUSE.
- HELP PRODUCE THE HRC NEWSLETTER.
- WORK ON THE HRC WEBSITE COMMITTEE.
- JOIN THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK (E.R.N.).
- HELP DISTRIBUTE HRC FLYERS & NEWSLETTERS.
- COME JOIN 'THE MOVEMENT'.

In the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr., Come Join Us!

To support HRC you only need to send your name, address, telephone number and tell us how you can help. No contribution is too small - a couple of hours a couple of dollars will be appreciated.

Human Rights Coalition
C/O Lava Space
4134 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Your Legal Corner

WE ACCEPT LEGAL ARTICLES THAT EDUCATE AND EMPOWER FAMILIES OF PRISONERS THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND LAWS, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THE POLICE, LAWYERS AND THE COURTS ON BEHALF OF THEIR LOVED ONES JUST FORWARD YOUR ARTICLE TO THE HRC'S NEWSLETTER DEPARTMENT FOR POSSIBLE PRINTING.

Constitution of Pennsylvania

Preamble

We, the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and humbly invoking His guidance, do ordain and establish this Constitution.

ARTICLE I

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

THAT THE GENERAL, GREAT AND ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY AND FREE GOVERNMENT MAY BE RECOGNIZED AND UNALTERABLY ESTABLISHED, WE DECLARE THAT -

SECTION 1. ALL MEN ARE BORN EQUALLY FREE AND INDEPENDENT, AND HAVE CERTAIN INHERENT AND INDEFEASIBLE RIGHTS, AMONG WHICH ARE THOSE OF ENJOYING AND DEFENDING LIFE AND LIBERTY, OF ACQUIRING, POSSESSING AND PROTECTING PROPERTY AND REPUTATION, AND OF PURSUING THEIR OWN HAPPINESS.

SECTION 2. ALL POWER IS INHERENT IN THE PEOPLE, AND ALL FREE GOVERNMENTS ARE FOUNDED ON THEIR AUTHORITY AND INSTITUTED FOR THEIR PEACE, SAFETY AND HAPPINESS. FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THESE ENDS THEY HAVE AT ALL TIMES AN INALIENABLE AND INDEFEASIBLE RIGHT TO ALTER, REFORM OR ABOLISH THEIR GOVERNMENT IN SUCH A MANNER AS THEY MAY THINK PROPER.

SECTION 3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF RELIGION.

SECTION 5. ELECTIONS SHALL BE FREE AND EQUAL.

SECTION 6. RIGHT TO TRIAL BY JURY.

SECTION 7. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF PRESS AND SPEECH.

SECTION 8. RIGHT FOR THE PEOPLE TO BE SECURE FROM UNREASONABLE SEARCHES AND SEIZURES.

SECTION 9. RIGHT TO BE HEARD BY HIMSELF AND HIS LEGAL COUNSEL, TO CONFRONT WITNESSES, TO HAVE A SPEEDY TRIAL, AND AN IMPARTIAL JURY.

SECTION 10. NO PERSON SHALL, FOR THE SAME OFFENSE, BE TWICE PUT IN JEOPARDY OF LIFE OR LIM; NOR SHALL PRIVATE PROPERTY BE TAKEN OR APPLIED TO PUBLIC USE, WITHOUT AUTHORITY OF LAW AND WITHOUT JUST COMPENSATION BEING FIRST MADE OR SECURED. (Double Jeopardy/Eminent Domain)

SECTION 11. RIGHT TO ACCESS OF THE COURTS, AND A RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS OF THE LAW.

Your Legal Corner

SECTION 13. RIGHT TO HAVE NO EXCESSIVE BAIL, FINES IMPOSED, NOR CRUEL PUNISHMENTS INFLICTED.

SECTION 14. THE PRIVILEGE OF THE WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS SHALL NOT BE SUSPENDED, UNLESS WHEN IN CASE OF REBELLION OR INVASION.

SECTION 20. RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE IN PEACEABLE MANNER, AND RIGHT TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT.

SECTION 21. RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS IN DEFENSE OF THEMSELVES.

SECTION 25. TO GUARD AGAINST TRASGRESSIONS OF THE HIGH POWERS WHICH WE HAVE DELEGATED, WE DECLARE THAT EVERYTHING IN THIS ARTICLE IS EXCEPTED OUT OF THE GENERAL POWERS OF GOVERNMENT AND SHALL FOREVER REMAIN INVIOLETE. (Reservations of Powers in People)

SECTION 26. RIGHT TO CIVIL RIGHTS, AND RIGHT NOT TO BE DISCRIMATED AGAINST ANY PERSON IN THE EXERCISE OF ANY CIVIL RIGHT BY THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA.

ARTICLE III

SECTION 23. THE POWER TO CHANGE THE VENUE IN CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CASES SHALL BE INVESTED IN THE COURTS.

ARTICLE V

SECTION 9. THERE SHALL BE A RIGHT OF APPEAL IN ALL CASES TO A COURT OF RECORD, AND THERE SHALL BE OTHER RIGHTS OF APPEAL AS MAY BE PROVIDED BY LAW.

SECTION 10. RIGHT TO LEGAL COUNSEL (See also, PA-Rules of Criminal Procedure, Rule 904 (F)(2))

Your Legal Corner

WE ACCEPT LEGAL ARTICLES THAT EDUCATE AND EMPOWER FAMILIES OF PRISONERS THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND LAWS, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THE POLICE, LAWYERS AND THE COURTS ON BEHALF OF THEIR LOVED ONES JUST

Free the Innocent Because Tomorrow it Could Be You

By Lorenzo Johnson

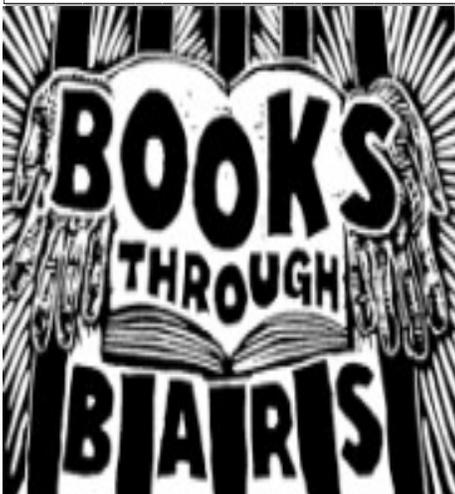
What happens when your innocent and can't afford the proper representation!

It all start's with you being appointed a Public Defender/Court Appointed Attorney who already have a case load of a hundred (100) and growing daily. This attorney has no time to investigate or prepare a proper defense for you. By time you really meet your attorney, you will be starting your trial process within days. So now you're rushed into a situation where you're not ready. Your witness/witnesses have not been contacted or interviewed by your attorney. Your alibi hasn't been checked into or out, in some case's people try to have DNA testing done that can clear them, the attorney shows no effectiveness so that's out the window. Many case's pre-trial discovery was never inspected, where as in some people's cases the innocence can be found in the case discovery. Trials starts and your attorney defense is they (prosecutor) have to prove every element and your not testifying or calling any witness/witnesses on our behalf. Here it is, you had a alibi or a witness/witnesses to refute the witness/witnesses who are testifying against you and your attorney never contacted them. Now the jury hands down a guilty verdict and your attorney looks at you and say I'm sorry!!

A lot of attorneys tell you "I'll be out to see you tomorrow" and never come. Some say I will file an appeal and they'll file it late and some never even file one for you. Once this attorney sell you out on your Direct appeal, you're forced to learn the law yourself, while your proceeding pro se you have to be mindful of the strict guidelines on filing your appeals. There's another route some of us take which is contacting pro bono attorneys, Innocent Organizations and etc. in hopes of being heard. While all of this is taking place, you take notice of you being another victim of an ineffective attorney. All Public Defenders/Court Appointed Attorneys ARE NOT ineffective but! THE MAJORITY ARE... So BEWARE this is a couple of examples of many of "What happens when you're INNOCENT and can't afford the proper REPRESENTATION"....

THE PAIN WITHIN

*"When a LIFE is at stake,
there is no room for ERROR or Injustice"*



Mission Statement

We believe a society of social and economic inequality leads to a cycle of crime and incarceration. We work to reverse the dehumanizing effects excessive punishment inflicts upon individuals, families and communities. Books Through Bars sends quality reading material to prisoners and encourages creative dialogue on the criminal justice system, thereby educating those living inside and outside of prison walls.

Books Through Bars | 4722 Baltimore Ave. | Philadelphia, PA 19143
215-727-8170 | info@booksthroughbars.org

Class Struggle Over Race

By: D.G., Anarchist Activist

I have recently read the October/December edition of THE MOVEMENT newsletter by the HRC and I felt I needed to write. My question is why was there so much focus on race in the issue?

Many of the articles comes across as a call to solidarity of “all” lower income class of people regardless of race or ethnicity, but in the next it comes across as somewhat anti-white. As a 25 year old white man that grew up in the projects, I can tell you that articles that have what seems to be anti-white words or phrases in them like KKKops, White Establishment, Amerikkka, and white folks, tends to push away and ostracize the many white people who are also anti-establishment, prison abolitionists, prisoner activists, human rights activists, and anarchists who are mainly white an who support all organizations that work for equality and fair treatment, and against oppression of all kinds. I know that I can’t sign up for subscription the few white people I am connected to, because some of them may be put off from the newsletter when they read some of the radicalized wording in the articles, as many other white people in middle America would be.

My point is that, yes White people “established” these systems, but they are no longer exclusively white establishments because from top to bottom throughout America there are more and more Black, Latino, and Asian people filling in their oppressive ranks and joining the governments to put their foot on our necks too. Blacks, Latinos, and Asians have joined this oppressive system as junior partners to oppress the lower classes in America no matter what color you are. If you go to Philly or my hometown of Chicago, around half of police, lawyers, judges, and corrections guards you see are Black or Latino, and are just as willing to quickly murder us in cold blood as a White cop. At SCI-Graterford Prison the majority of the guards are Black and you will find them searching our families’ cars, spitting in our food, fabricating misconduct reports, and beating us while handcuffed all the way to the hole right beside the White guards. This applies to the police in our cities too. A lot of times you will find the Black guards, cops, and judges act worse than racist White ones in their treatment against Black and Latinos. If you go to every major city in America, like Philly, New York, DC, Chicago, Detroit, Atlanta, Miami, LA, etc., you will find that their city governments are now majority-ran by Black or Latino Mayors, City Council members, Police Commissioner, D.A., and Prison Superintendents. They are just as much the oppressor in the political establishment now, as white peoples of the rich/middle classes are, they are the Black/Latino ruling classes in America.

My point is that it is not entirely “race” anymore in this day and age, it is more so about “class struggle”. The rich/middle classes of people in America, regardless of their race or ethnicity, are the ruling class of America.

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They are the political establishment; a multi-racial ruling class of oppressors is who runs this country. The rich stay rich and the poor get poorer. It is the “Haves versus the Have-Nots”. There will always be racist people, both White and Black, but the generations of youths today have not grown up in a racially polarized environment as people have in the past, and therefore, are not as concerned about race as older people are. Which may explain why many Black youth don’t become members of the Nation of Islam and White youths don’t become part of groups like the Aryan Nation. There are some who join these groups, but their numbers are not many.

Capitalist American continues to oppress the working class Black, White, Latino, Asian, and Native American people, because we are not UNITED due to people constantly focusing on race, religion, and other manufactured differences. Lets focus on what we have in common, because all of us (the people) are being oppressed and violated in one way or another. We now have finally elected a Black president, President Barack Obama, and though we all have high hopes and expectations of him to change America, we must understand completely that he is no Martin Luther King, Jr. or Malcolm X, and will not bring any “real” change to America as King and Malcolm would have if not assassinated. President Obama will continue to uphold capitalism throughout the world, continue to uphold the status quo of the rich in America and abroad, and continue America’s imperialist foreign policy of a militarized global domination of the world— especially of Africa, Latin America and the Middle East—while keeping the world in poverty and on the brink of starvation.

No matter what the color of the person that sits in the White House as President or what political party that’s in the executive office (Dems or Repubs), the economic, political, and social problems we face in America will not be changed by them (the Haves, the Establishment). It must be changed by US, WE THE PEOPLE! And “We the People” are an oppressed people of Whites, Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans. Just read ‘A Peoples’ History’ by Howard Zinn. So lets all come together and organize to bring about real change in America. And as the Black Panther Party would say:

ALL POWER TO ALL THE PEOPLE!

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RESIST is a progressive foundation that supports grassroots organizing for peace, economic, social and environmental justice, and provides political education for social change activism. For 40 years, **RESIST** has funded groups that challenge reactionary government policies, corporate arrogance, and right-wing fanaticism through organizing, education and action.

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| <p>Please provide:</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Phone #: _____</p> <p>Email: _____</p> | <p>Send to:</p> <p>Human Rights Coalition Attention: Newsletter Subscription C/O Lava Space 4134 Lancaster Avenue Philadelphia, PA 191xx</p> <p>Subscription Rates:</p> <p>Families of Prisoners – FREE! Prisoners - \$6.00 One Year Subscription</p> |
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Code Red Alert!

A Code Red Alert! Is given to the top five most anti-family, corrupt, racist, and human rights violating State Correctional Institutions (S.C.I. s) within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA D.O.C).

THE TOP FIVE SCI HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSERS

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| #1 | SCI-CAMP HILL | Camp Hill, PA - Charges: Extreme racism, Human Rights abuses in solitary confinement/SMU, corruption, abuse of authority, hostility towards families of prisoners. |
| #2 | SCI-GREENE | Waynesburg, PA - Charges: Extreme racism, Human Rights abuses in solitary confinement, corruption, abuse of authority, hostility towards families of prisoners, abuse of DEATH ROW prisoners. |
| #3 | SCI-MUNCY/SCI-CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS (Women Prisons) | Muncy, PA/Cambridge Springs, PA - Charges: Sexism, Human Rights abuses, corruption, abuse of authority, hostility towards families of prisoners. |
| #4 | SCI-FAYETTE | LaBelle, PA - Charges: Racism, Human Rights abuses in solitary confinement, corruption, abuse of authority, hostility towards families of prisoners. |
| #5 | SCI-MAHANAY | Frackville, PA - Charges: Racism, corruption, abuse of authority, human rights abuses in solitary confinement, hostility towards families of prisoners. |

The PA Department of Corrections has been recognized by secular and religious groups throughout Pennsylvania, as inherently the most corrupt, racist, anti-family, and Human Rights violator agency in the state.

The Human Rights Coalition has determined, through documented legal evidence and tens of thousands of reported prisoner complaints made per year, that the PA DOC CENTRAL OFFICE serves as the bastion of corruption, racism, anti-family, and human rights abuses. Through the PA DOC TRAINING ACADEMY, the PA DOC has developed a prison culture racism, sexism, Human Rights abuses of prisoners, and hostility towards families of prisoners that has spilled over into the State Correctional Institutions (SCIs), poisoning the entire PA DOC system.

PA Department of Corrections
Central Office

PA DOC Training Academy
Elizabethtown, PA

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Economic Insanity: State Spends \$700 Million to Build 3 New Prisons During Economic Crisis!

California is a part of a growing trend of Prison "Down Sizing". The state of New York has long since began to close its prison doors. Other states, Arizona, Kentucky, New Jersey, and Vermont has recently made changes to their Parole Laws to relieve the financial burden of incarceration.

In Pennsylvania, the wheel appears to be rolling in the opposite direction— the Keystone State seems to be a bit reluctant when it comes to its prison keys. Pennsylvania's Governor Ed Rendell, in his yearly budget, has proposed the spending of \$700 Million for the construction of three new State Prisons—which would bring the states number of prisons to thirty-one. This proposal comes at a time when the state is operating on a projected budget deficit of \$2.3 Billion, slashing government funded social programs and hemorrhaging from massive unemployment.

In furthering his opposite approach to "prison down sizing and education, Governor Rendell has proposed to cut \$21 Million in funding to Pennsylvania's colleges and universities, and a 2.3 percent cut to libraries across the state. As acknowledge by the California Superior Court, the Mayor of San Francisco, and Bill Cosby, it is this approach that poses a greater threat to society.

During testimony before the Pennsylvania General Assembly on February 24, 2009 stated that the Pa. D.O.C. is currently running with 7,000 inmates over its bed capacity. At \$98,00 a day per inmate, for three-hundred and sixty-five days, it is costing Pa. taxpayers \$250,390,000 a year to house those extra 7,000 inmates. If Pennsylvania were to start down sizing its prison population, starting with those 7,000 inmates, the state would be able to continue funding the libraries, colleges, and universities the Governor intends to make cuts to.

The average State institution in Pennsylvania houses roughly 2,400 inmates. Close two prisons and tax dollars will be free for investment in adequate skill training, education, recidivism prevention, and re-entry programs. As the California Court has noted, such investments limits the risk and dangers to society that the critics claim will take place if a mass release of prisoners was to take place. Secretary Beard found this to be true during his testimony stating that education, vocational training, and skill development plays a significant role in inmates being released from prison and becoming productive members of society. The Secretary further noted that of the inmates released from prison on parole, 95 percent do not re-commit crimes or re-enter prison, only 4 percent do, and 1/2 of that 4 percent are violent. He acknowledged that those numbers are not mentioned when violent parole violator's committing crimes are used as basis to halt parole, create tougher laws, and build more prisons.

With a projected budget deficit as dismal as Pennsylvania's, the unwillingness to reverse its prison spending is an egregious failure of financial responsibility. Health care is failing, education is failing, the capitalist economy as a whole is failing, and as a result, the state is failing. Pennsylvania does not need new prisons, nor does it need most of the old ones. What the state needs is competent governing and fiscal awareness viewed through the eye's of the people. Far to long have we allowed our elected officials to dip into our pockets, it's time we demand a change. We must protest for change! Flood the streets, raise our voices, and surround the State Capital Building and Pa. Department of Corrections Head Quarters to demand change. It is our responsibility as citizens to demand that we be heard.

We must unite and assemble to get the political establishment to hear our demands of 'No! to the \$700 Million spending of taxpayer dollars to build three new prisons' and 'Yes! To spending \$700 Million to create new jobs, provide health care, build new schools, and provide prisoner re-entry programs.' Lets discontinue following the failed strategy of building more new prisons and passing tougher laws to prevent crime, and instead forge a new path to the solution of our society's problem of poverty and crime.

Power to the People
Camara

