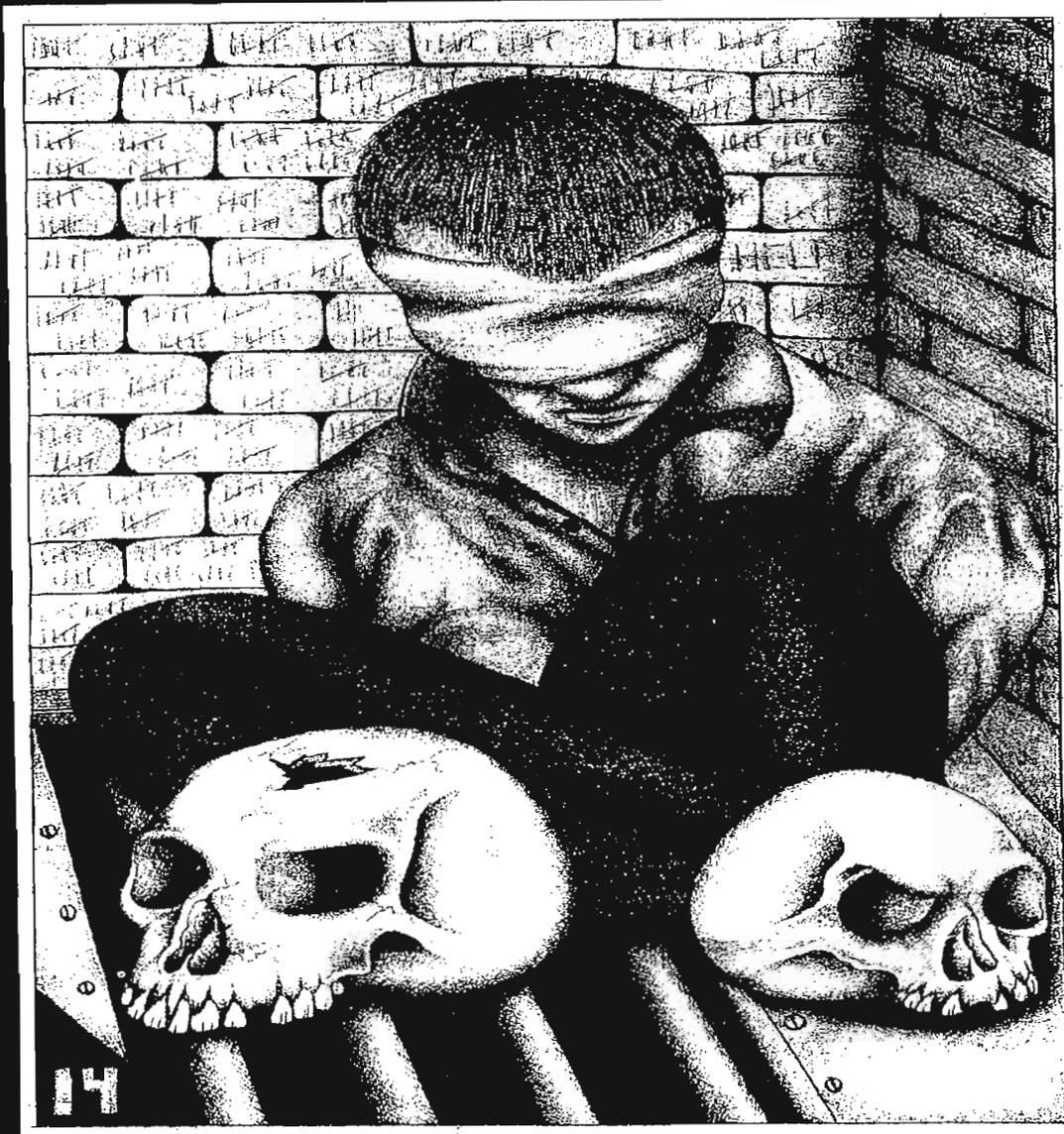


Break The Chains

Newsletter of the Break The Chains Collective/Issue #21, Spring 2005



Drawing by California prisoner Walter James

Inside this issue: Security Housing Units & Socio-Political Repression; UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women; June 10-12 Weekend of Resistance for Jeff "Free" Luers; Report on the Safiya Bukhari Human Rights Weekend, and much more!

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MISSION STATEMENT

Break The Chains is a non-hierarchical collective working toward building an egalitarian society free of prisons. We are committed to the dynamic internal and external process of challenging racism, sexism, classism, and oppression in all its forms. Our focus is on prison issues, including, but not limited to: fighting state repression, prisoner support and prison abolition.

- Fighting State Repression means exposing and countering the efforts of the state to imprison activists and criminalize dissent and resistance. This takes the form of providing assistance to those on the outside facing time due to their involvement in social movements, exposing grand juries, COINTELPRO and other forms of counter intelligence, while educating the public about political and social prisoners.
- Prisoner Support includes supporting national Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War*, and politically active social prisoners on the West Coast. A social prisoner may not have been engaged in political activity on the outside, but has devoted inside time to struggling against injustice. We work to accomplish support by publishing the writings of prisoners engaged in resistance struggles, offering financial assistance when available, getting the word out about various cases, and exchanging information with social prisoners about resistance movements. While we cannot provide legal assistance, we may be able to direct prisoners to resources.
- Prison Abolition is the dismantling of the prison-industrial complex by working with groups opposing new prison construction, and engaging in restorative justice and decarceration initiatives. Our ultimate objective is to eliminate the prison-industrial complex by helping to build a society in which prisons are obsolete.

Link the Struggles to Break The Chains!

**Political Prisoner: A person incarcerated for actions carried out in support of legitimate struggles for self determination* or for opposing the illegal policies of the government and/or its political subdivisions. (Special International Tribunal on the Violation of Human Rights of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in the United States Prisons and Jails, December, 1990)*

**Prisoner of War: Those combatants struggling against colonial and alien domination and racist regimes captured as prisoners are to be accorded the status of prisoner of war and their treatment should be in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. (August 12, 1949, General Assembly Resolution 3103 [XXVIII])*

Welcome to BTC #22

Greetings! We are close to our Equinox goal of having this newsletter completed! Spring, Vernal equinox. We send the energy of the aroma of Oregon Douglas Fir trees, blooming flowers and grasses. Spring can remind one of process. It reminds us that even when things get sluggish and tiresome, there comes a time of rejuvenation.

We are still processing Matt Lamont (congratulations on your release!) and Ojore Lutalo's articles of last summer and fall. There is no "BTC response" to Ojore in this newsletter. His letters to activists in Eugene seemed to provoke varying responses ranging from defensiveness to overly identifying. Responses within our collective have been dynamic. The first couple takes at a written reply were interpreted quite differently a couple months later. More discussion. Intensity. Alas, no consensus. Not even a unified response to not writing a response. One of us stepped back rather than block others' proposal to not write one.

We've had a few responses from white prisoners, which seemed to be written directly to Ojore rather than as a general submission. Rather than printing those, we would like to encourage those who wrote to BTC to write Ojore directly. It may open up dialogue about activism and the meaning of revolution/ary.

The Prisoner Correspondence Project (PCP) is aimed toward coalition building amongst people on the inside and people on the outside. We've been kicking butt sending out clarification letters regarding the purpose of the project and entering bios that match PCP objectives. We've realized the importance of checking in with an organization before advertising something for them, though! The Coalition for Prisoner Rights (of Santa Fe, NM) printed an ad about the PCP and we've been bombarded by requests and submissions! We are no longer accepting submissions. We hope to have the directory printed in May, and will need stamps for sending PCP directories. Next April 2006, we will reevaluate the Project (if anyone has ideas of how to evaluate its success, send it our way).

Other things we have been doing: In December, Break The Chains held a successful benefit for the Jericho Movement AIDS Education Campaign and for the local HIV Alliance. A couple of us traveled to New York in the winter for the Jericho Movement Safiya Bukhari Human Rights weekend. Fortunately, they also had time to visit a few political prisoners in upstate NY as well as checking in with Ray Luc Levasseur in Maine.

Break The Chains will be participating in the upcoming Attica to Abu Ghraib conference down in Oakland/Berkley. It should be a superb sensory overload kind of weekend!

June 12th marks the fifth year of Jeff "Free" Luers incarceration. We are working in collaboration with Friends of Jeff Luers preparing for a weekend of solidarity & resistance. Jeff was able to present a keynote via audiotape for the E-Law conference held at the U of Oregon (Eugene) in early March. We have typed copies available. If you would like a transcript of the keynote, send us a few stamps along with a note.

We're very pleased to report that we have some new women's voices in the collective. We're opening up dialogue about what women in prison want to see the BTC Women's committee prioritizing and working on. We've mailed out a pamphlet and an intro letter to all women on our mailing list. One of our ideas is to produce a Women's BTC newsletter. This would go out quarterly, beginning this Summer. We envision it to be a space mixed with submissions of art and writing from female prisoners and reprinted articles/prose/poetry. Being as females are the fastest growing prisoner population, maybe we can affect that depressing fact. Radical change.

Radical - of or pertaining to the root; proceeding directly from the root; reaching to the center of the ultimate source; affecting vital principles; hence, thorough-going. Let's move forward with radical change, working at it within the realms of our individual and collective lives.

Is a being a radical consistent with being a revolutionary? What IS a revolutionary? Questions to ponder for a future newsletter focus, maybe.

Until then, stay strong and focused ~ BTC.

"Our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system." - Dorothy Day

CORPORATIONS

THE STATE

**AXIS
OF
EVIL**

RELIGION

Governments and the military purport to protect the public from enemies, and if there were no enemies they would have to invent some, for the simple purpose of rationalizing their existence....

- Laurance Labadie, son of Joseph Labadie

Subscription Info

Subscriptions are free to all prisoners in California, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington, and to women prisoners of any state. One-year subscriptions are \$6 to other prisoners and \$12 to non-prisoners. Individual copies are \$2 postage paid. Checks can be made out to "Break The Chains". We also accept well-concealed cash and payments in postage.

Correspondence Project

Break The Chains' Prisoner Correspondence Project (PCP) is about linking struggles. It is designed to connect folks who are working toward radical change within the framework of anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-homophobic, anti-sexist, pro-Native sovereignty, environmental and/or economic justice movements.

The 2005 edition of the Prisoner Correspondence Project directory will be available by early June. The cost is \$1 for prisoners, \$2 for others, stamps acceptable as payment. (If you already sent us payment, don't worry—we've got it! Your directory will be out as soon as it's off the presses!) The directory only contains addresses of folks on the inside—if you can't send mail to or receive mail from a prison, the manual won't be useful to you.

Folks on the outside can help us market and distribute this Project by:

- A) Telling other folks about the Prisoner Correspondence Project. It will need lots of networking by those of us on the outside to make the Project worthwhile.
- B) Copy the directory as well as the "Writing to Prisoners" info sheet and distribute. Talk to folks, educate and encourage.
- C) Donate to the project! Money and stamps accepted.

A few friends & Allies

Chicago Anarchist Black Cross
PO Box 721, Homewood IL 60430

Chicago ABC does a tremendous amount of support for radical political & social prisoners throughout the country.

Prison Activist Resource Center
PO Box 339, Berkeley CA 94701

PARC is an information clearing-house for people interested in prison issues. They also provide a resource directory to prisoners free upon request.

SECURITY HOUSING UNITS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL REPRESSION

BY BENNY TAPIA



Most people are unaware that those imperial military strategies used to conquer and suppress nations are used on prisoners by the California Department of Corrections (CDC). Since most people (esp. prisoners) are not political or revolutionary, they are unable to comprehend the socio-economic/cultural consequences of CDC rules and regulations, particularly those governing the Security Housing Units (SHUs). For this reason, this spiel will deal specifically with the cause and effect of CDC's SHUs and its historical relation to imperialism.

For the most part SHUs are designated housing units where cells are windowless and empty (with the exception of a sink and toilet), in which particular inmates are permanently housed. These units are based on "Stammien's Model" perfected in West Germany during the 70s for the purpose of eradicating certain political views and/or eliminating political dissent. CDC's SHUs are primarily intended for "influential prisoners", specifically "political prisoners", "prison organizers", and "aggressive reactionary prisoners." The objective of the SHU is to precisely and systematically remove from these prisoners all desire to resist the U.S.A. socio-economic/cultural status quo. This socio-imperial compliance is attempted through "sensory deprivation" via solitary confinement. By reducing these prisoners to a primal, hyper-sensitive (i.e. reactionary) state, CDC can effectively control them both externally and internally.

Through understanding the purpose of these units, we can deduce unequivocally that SHUs are the means to weaken and undermine any progressive "apparatus" prisoners may attempt to manifest and/or disrupt, disorganize, and dissolve any existing apparatuses. In fact, it is in CDC interest that prisoners remain fragmented, debilitated, and impoverished. Having rules and regulations that exacerbates the criminal mentality perpetuates the criminal justice system¹ and effectively diverts prisoners' focus away from the institutionalized racist and classist injustice system and keeps it on each other. This is evident in race on race conflict, interracial conflict, etc. Imperialism aims to keep the proletariat both suppressed and compliant. Thus it stays its historical course of isolate, divide, conquer, and, manage/exploit.

Along with the above-mentioned ramifications, it is a huge economic incentive for CDC to keep SHUs filled to capacity (as CDC received more money from the State to operate its New World Order high security prison units). It accomplishes this by seeking out and rewarding with petty prison privileges, the prisoner comprador class (men of weak resolve), for the incrimination of "influential prisoners." Removing influential prisoners from the general prison population (GPP) reduces the collective consciousness of the GPP to an easily manipulated tool of the State. This subsequently insures that the lumpen proletariat will remain incapacitated and the U.S.A.'s socio-economic/cultural status quo will remain intact. It has always been imperial policy to reward collaborators/conformers and destroy or attempt to destroy resisters (see Iraq 2001-present). And while the reactionary's focus is fixated on the "snitch", a progressive prisoner's focus is on the system that created the "snitch."



In order for an elevated consciousness to emerge amongst prisoners, it is imperative that they acquire an in-depth comprehension of their captor's objectives. Therefore, to understand the political aspect of the SHU experience, it is appropriate to include a few quotes:

"In order to produce marked changes in behavior it is necessary to weaken, undermine, or remove support for old attitudes. I would like to think of brainwashing not in terms of... ethics or morals, but in terms of the deliberate changing of human behavior by a group of men who have relatively complete control over the environment in which the captives live... These changes can be induced by isolation, sensory deprivation, segregation of leaders, spying, tricking men into signing written statements which are then shown to others, placing individuals whose power has been severely weakened into living situations with those more advanced in thought reform, character invalidation, humiliation, sleeplessness, rewarding subservience, and fear".²

"Through a year or more of sensory and psychological deprivation, prisoners are stripped of their individual identities in order that compliant behavior patterns can be implanted, a process of modification and depersonalization".³

"The purpose of this new counter-intelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, or other wise neutralize the activities of... nationalist organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters".⁴

Understanding not only the tactics, but also the strategies of the captors, prisoners can make those necessary preparations to convert their repression into liberation. In the SHUs, one should fully and completely embrace the notion that survival is synonymous with struggle. Indeed, the effectiveness of one's "struggle" will eventually become measurable by the degree of repression the system applies. Once prisoners acknowledge this, they transcend repression. For example when such things as prison "privileges" and "comfort" lose all appeal, the lumpen proletariat as a class are at the beginning of the end of repression. However, this will require complete dedication to those pursuits. By "complete dedication" I mean a staunch allegiance to the demise of those material conditions that sustain the prison industrial complex.

Prisoners must realize the stark distinction between one who breaks laws and one who rejects them. The first is a criminal, the latter a revolutionary. That is, the latter does not affirm (by conformity) U.S.A. imperialism. This does not imply one is in denial of his/her material conditions, it means one does not suffer from a neo-colonized inferiority complex. Indeed, once a critical number of prisoners acquire this political understanding they can begin to use their whole existence to apply and maintain stress to the system for a duration to exceed no longer than the materialization of their socio-political resolutions – liberation. Anyone who does not believe in sacrifice after this critical number is manifested is not committed to results, and anyone who does not apply dialectical materialism (revolutionary practice) in the SHUs is particularly vulnerable to the SHUs. Those who retain neo-colonial ambitions, be it CDC conformity or socio-political assimilation, will be weakened by the constant tempting of socio-imperial apparels. Therefore, if one refuses to be the broken by the adverse conditions of the SHUs prey and property of U.S.A. imperialism, one must completely reject those values and interests that make one ripe for ruling and exploiting. In the bowels of imperialism, liberation begins in the mind and can only be actualized through struggle.

Tenamitl.

¹ Evident by the highest recidivist rate in the USA

² Dr. Edgar Schein Methodology, addressing wardens of Federal maximum security prisons

³ Language from the John Howard Association

⁴ Internal memo of FBI COINTELPRO

Home is Not Where I Lay My Head

It's late, and my sleep is blocked. Yet isn't that what they intended? Slumber is that one space where I am either completely relaxed, or I am caught up facing fears my waking psyche refuses to admit even exists. It's the realm where my throne is regal, gigantic and unhindered. Peaceful. It's where I am a Mastodon in my power; massive and intimidating, yet graceful in my clumsy swagger.

Free to wander, wherever I may roam, to soak up the Sun. And the only bogs in my life are the muddy ones that I enjoy bathing in. Sleep takes me to the deep and dark (yet warm) recesses of my sanctimonious palace.

Where diaphanous pillows mingle with soft flesh. It's the one place where I am brave enough to unshackle my emotions and truly reach for human contact, whether it be getting in touch with myself; or reaching out to another lonely soul searching for some similar answers. Where time is timeless, not droll and dreary. Where I am only alone when I choose to be.

Where I am doing the things that I fully enjoy; when I want, and how I want to. In my sleep I am reunited with my former life; my family and friends, lovers both past and present. I can still scratch my dogs ears, rub his belly and grimace at his wet sloppy kisses. Even though he has passed away since I have fallen – no doubt wondering where his Pops was at... In my dreams I ride on trains that slide on rails through beautiful mountainside tunnels before they stretch across the desert.

I can swim when I am sleeping! Submerging myself in the bluest oceanic depths until my lungs feel like they are gonna burst, and I come exploding to the surface – the way I do when I awaken from nightmares; slick and salty not from seawater, but from my own tears of loss, and sweat. My overactive mind plays tricks on me when I sleep, and even fools me into thinking that I am partaking in pleasures of the flesh. Man do I miss the (physically free) world. I won't expound on that.

In my sleep, there are no doors with locks on them. All the doors are open in fact. And the bars contain beautiful melodies of music, and the time signatures of rhythm. Food is so delightful in my sleep, and I can indulge in feasts at my own whim, not merely eat when allowed.

In my sleep I can shower alone, and take a shit in peace, and my friends can talk to me whenever they feel inclined to; unwatched by prying eyes, and unhindered by racial barriers, or the status quo. It's where I am away from here, without the strife and drama. Absent from the restlessness, and invading, watchful eyes. The blank stares and uniformity. The voices of authority, and all the... Complaining.

My sleep is precious. I feel ripped off when I can't get there – maybe when they coined the phrase that you were robbed of your sleep last night; they were really on to something.

When I can't sleep at night my life becomes absolute turmoil. My inner dialogue takes over and asks questions that I refuse to fully answer, causing me to review things over and over in my head; like a broken reel of film that flashes onscreen repetitively.

If I can't sleep my mind visits places that I'd rather forget. Places that I dread. Picking myself apart and bringing back the tears that I've already shed. Tears at the loss of my freedom, and tears at the loss of life as I know it... Sleep... I yearn for that place.

Where I soar in my solitude and ascend towards the heavens from that crypt in which I now reside. Not death in the literal sense, but close to it. Sleep is that sacred space that is required to replenish Life.

That place where I am an Angel destroying Babylon.

Where all my sins are forgiven.

Where I can tumble and fall with broken wings and never suffer an impact. Until I awaken within the bowels of my confines... The suffocation of my surroundings.

I can't wait to get to that one sleep where I awaken in another place.

The place known as freedom.

The place I really call home.

By Anthony "Tigger" Vaughn



UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

I've been working with the American Friends Service Committee as a human rights advocate on behalf of prisoners in the United States for the past 30 years. The relationship between women living in poverty and women being incarcerated is indisputable. There are currently over 950,000 women in criminal justice custody in the US with thousands of those living under other forms of social control such as parole or probation. Since 1980 the number of women entering prisons in the US has risen almost 400%, double the rate of men. Nearly a quarter of these women are mentally ill, with untold numbers being infected with AIDS. 40% held no jobs prior to imprisonment; two thirds of them are women of color and 60% of them are mothers of an estimated 1.3 million minor children. Incarcerated women bear a double burden of punishment: their children "do time" with them. The average age of the women in prison is 29 and 58% haven't finished high school. Without any fanfare, the "war on drugs" in this country has become a war on women and it has clearly contributed to the explosion in the women's prison population.



I'd like to share some of the voices of the women in prison that I hear during my day:

From New Jersey, "We are forced to sleep on the floor in the middle of winter with bad backs and aching bodies, cold air still blowing from the vents no matter what the temperature was outside. At two o'clock in the morning they wake you up and tell you to clear the room. They go through your personal belongings and then put them in the trash...."

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

From Arizona, "the only thing you get in isolation is a peanut butter sandwich in the morning, a cheese sandwich in the afternoon and for supper another peanut butter sandwich. If you want a drink here, you have to drink toilet water...."

From Missouri, "When I refused to move into a double cell, they came into my cell and dragged me out and threw me on my back. I was beaten about my face and head. One of the guards stuck his finger in my eye deliberately. I was then rolled on my stomach and cuffed on my wrists with leg irons on my ankles. I was made to walk a thousand feet with the leg irons. Then they put me in a device called a restraint chair. When they put you in this chair your hands are cuffed behind your back and tucked under your buttocks. They stripped me naked.... and kept me there over 9 hours until I fouled myself on my hands which were tucked underneath me through a hole in the chair.

These past years have been full of thousands of calls and complaints of an increasingly disturbing nature from prisoners and their families throughout the United States. The proportion of those complaints coming from women has risen, with women describing conditions of confinement, which are torture. They suffer from sexual abuse by staff, with one woman saying, "I am tired of being gynaecologically examined every time I'm searched." Another prisoner put it, "That was not part of my sentence, to...perform oral sex with officers." Women have reported the inappropriate use of restraints on pregnant and sick prisoners, including one woman whose baby was coming at the same time the guard who had shackled her legs was on a break somewhere else in the hospital.

Other abuses include medical care, which is often so callous that it is life threatening. We have received reports about a woman who died of pancreatic disease that went undiagnosed, about a mentally ill woman who was confined naked in a filthy cell where she ingested her own bodily waste, about a woman who suffered burns over 54% of her body and gradually lost mobility when she was denied the special bandages which would keep her skin from tightening, and from a woman who unsuccessfully begged staff for months to allow her to see a doctor. This particular woman was finally diagnosed with cancer, in enormous pain, with no pain medication. She died nine months after the diagnosis. I am currently dealing with a young woman with breast cancer at a prison in New Jersey where every agonizing stage of her medical care from chemotherapy to radiation has been achieved only by a war of calls and letters on her behalf.

Couple all of this with the lack of treatment for substance abuse, lack of counseling services, concerns about the inappropriate use of psychotropic medications, inappropriate use of restraints and you have an increasingly clear picture of what life is like for women in prison. Add the use of prison labor and the picture of the prison system continues to unfold. If you call to find out about NJ Tourism, you are very likely talking to a female prisoner - one who is working for \$.23 an hour with no vacations, union or any way to address working conditions.

There is no way to look into any aspect of prison or the wider criminal justice system without being slapped in the face with the racism and white supremacy that prisoners of color endure. If we dig deeper into these practices, the political function they serve is inescapable. Police, the courts, the prison system and the death penalty all serve as social control mechanisms. The economic function they serve is equally as chilling. I believe that in the US criminal justice system, the politics of the police, the politics of the courts, the politics of the prison system and the politics of the death penalty are a manifestation of the racism and classism which governs so much our lives. Every part of the criminal justice system falls most heavily on the poor and people of color, including the fact that slavery was guaranteed in the United States by the 13th amendment of the US Constitution. Although prison labor is not a focus today, involuntary prison slavery is real.

I work with Black and Latino youth and those young people tell me that the police feel like an occupation army as if inner cities were militarized zones. They feel that the schools and the courts are used as a feeder system to filter young blacks and Latinos into prisons where those bodies are suddenly worth a fortune. I've heard people say that the criminal justice system doesn't work. I've come to believe exactly the opposite - that it works perfectly as a matter of both economic and political policy.

I don't believe it is an accident that the young adolescent of color worth nothing to this country's economy suddenly generates between 30 and 60 thousand dollars a year once trapped in the criminal justice

system. The expansion of prisons, the court and police systems has been a boon to everyone from architects, plumbers, and electricians to food and medical vendors – all with one thing in common – a paycheck earned by keeping human beings in cages in human warehouses. The criminalization of poverty is a lucrative business and we've replaced the social safety net with a dragnet. I doubt that this would be tolerated if we were talking about mostly white folks or mostly rich folks. Not unlike the US era of chattel slavery, there is a class of people dependent on mostly poor people and bodies of color as a source for income. I suspect that these same dynamics are occurring internationally.

In 2002 the AFSC published a pamphlet called "Our Children's House", which contains the testimonies of the very young that have been sentenced to county youth detention facilities. One young woman who was placed in such a facility when she was 12 said they told her she had no name and that she was now number 5. When I began those interviews, I was unprepared for youngsters who were so afraid to talk that they wouldn't allow the use of their names. They described being held in isolation and used sexually. They talked of hearing, seeing and smelling things, about enduring treatment that is inappropriate for anyone, let alone children. As they spoke it was clear that it was the adults around them who were the lawless. Not only are these children taken from their families, they lose any chance at an equitable future.

I sit on the Board of the World Organization For Human Rights/USA. In 1998 we wrote the Shadow Report on the Status of Compliance by the US Government with the International Convention Against Torture. We found that the US was not meeting its obligations under that treaty, mentioning the treatment of women in US prisons in particular. Given what has happened at Abu Ghraib, given that the potential Attorney General for the US seems to sanction torture, given that the US heavily exports its concepts in everything from architecture, use of long term isolation, use of devices of torture and business philosophies of making money off of poor, bodies of color – it becomes imperative that more long term attention is given to what is happening to women in prison globally. AFSC has become so concerned about the use of isolation, sometimes keeping people in lockdown for years, that we are launching a nationwide effort to stop this practice in US prisons. That this is happening to imprisoned men, women and children is unconscionable. The increase in the number of women in prisons worldwide certainly has nothing to do with a global increase in the crime rates by women and girls.

Each and every one of the practices that the girls and women have testified to are in violation of dozens of international Treaties and Covenants. These practices violate the United Nations Convention Against Torture, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, UN Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and a dozen other international and regional laws and standards. The practices also fit the United Nations definition of genocide.

We need to alter the core of every system that slavery, racism and poverty has given birth to, particularly the criminal justice systems. There are many things we can do to push for social change. The need for outside advocates on behalf of our sisters in prisons is acute. Unfortunately, it's been my experience over the 30 years that women do not reach out to advocate on their own behalf. Perhaps we are too used to being the caretakers.

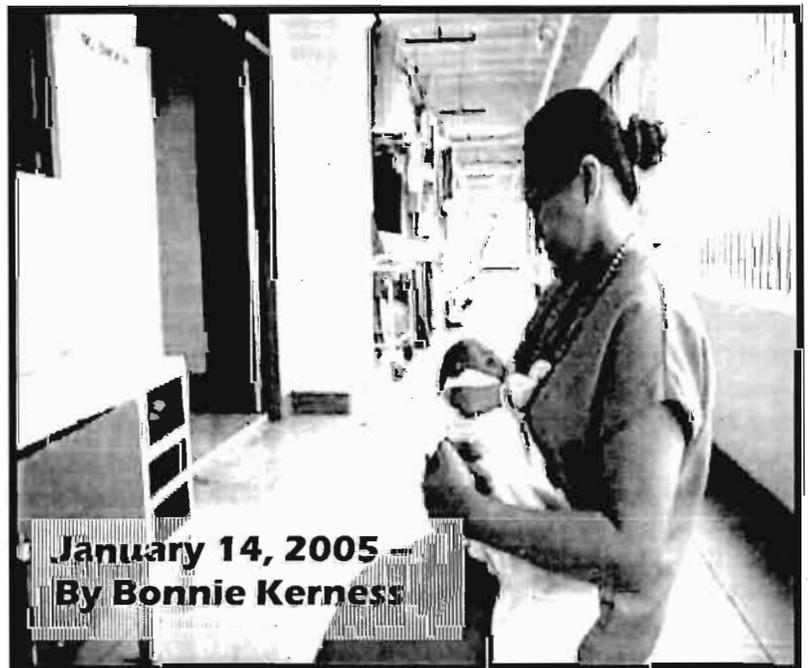
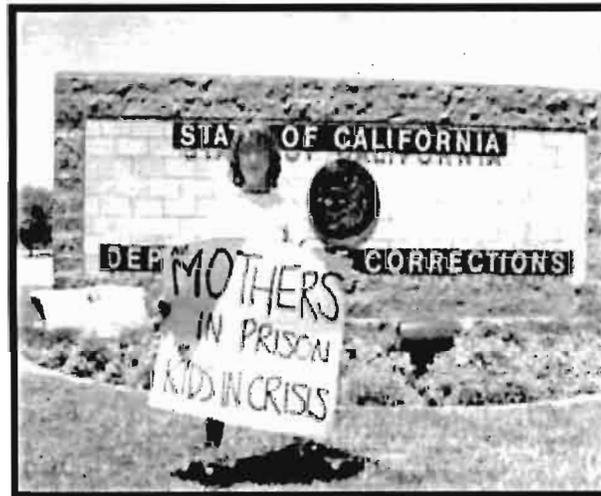
We must stop violations of human rights, particularly those of women and children. We must change the economic and racial profiling of arrest and sentencing practices. We need to decriminalize poverty, mental illness and in many cases, lesbianism. We must eliminate solitary confinement, torture and the use of devices of torture. We must support a vigorous monitoring of police, the court and prison systems with a global review process. We need to ensure enhanced use of international law. We desperately need to redirect the dollars going into prisons that belong in communities, in schools. The link between poverty, race, discrimination, sexual orientation and prisons cannot be denied.

The AFSC has always recognized the existence and continued expansion of the penal system as a profound spiritual crisis. It is a crisis that allows children to be demonized. It is a crisis that legitimizes torture, isolation and the abuse of power. It is a crisis that extends beyond prisons themselves into school and judicial systems. I know each time we send a child to bed hungry, that is violence. That wealth concentrated in the hands of a few at the expense of many is violence that the denial of dignity based on race, class or sexual preference is violence. And that poverty and prisons are a form of state-manifested violence.

Many years ago, a Vietnamese sister noted that, "When women become massively political, the revolution will have moved to a new level." We need the help of international bodies such as yours to ensure that real, world wide social change remains a priority. I can think of no surer way than to be fully present and advocate on behalf of those women and girls who are being used in the most calculated of ways.

Each of us needs to be clear on the connectedness between slavery and the criminal justice system, between US domestic policies towards people of color and US international policies towards countries of color. We need to develop an international sisterhood of

concern and say, "not in my name will these atrocities be committed any more." Over the years I have found it important to remind myself that the Department of Corrections is more than just a set of institutions, it is also a state of mind.



**January 14, 2005 –
By Bonnie Kerness**



June 2005 marks the five-year anniversary of the imprisonment of our friend and comrade: Oregon environmental political prisoner, Jeff "Free" Luers. Jeff was sentenced to more than 22 years in prison for burning three Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) at a car dealership in Eugene, Oregon, and on attempted arson charges. Jeff set fire to SUVs to call attention to climate change and to protest oil wars and environmental destruction. Jeff was motivated by compassion and a desire to protect life, not to harm it, despite what some might think of his tactics. Prior to his arrest, Jeff was a popular community activist in Eugene. He was well-known to law enforcement because of his involvement with national forest protection (starting an occupation of a controversial old-growth timber sale in 1998), anti-police brutality activism (documenting rampant police abuse in Eugene), free food programs in a local park and his teaching of self-defense. Since his imprisonment, Jeff has continued to be extremely active in prison and fight oppression with his words and inspiration.

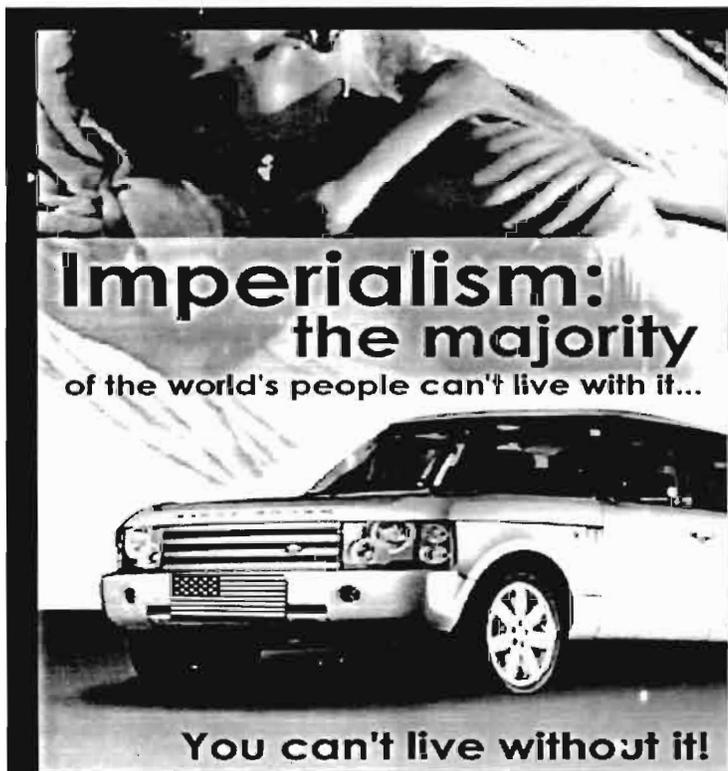
On June 12, 2004, social and environmental activists in the US, Canada, England, Scotland, Norway, Finland, Australia, and Russia participated in an "International Day of Action" with Jeff by organizing non-violent protests and community events to show their support for him and their disgust for his cruel sentence. The FBI responded by creating a real 'Green Scare', sending a memo to businesses, corporate media, and government agencies warning of planned "terrorist attacks" by the "Earth Liberation Front" on June 12. Of course, no "terrorist attacks" ever occurred. All of the events were peaceful and public, ranging from concerts and demonstrations, to video showings and dinner parties. Even some mainstream media

outlets recognized the FBI memo for what it was - a manipulative, dishonest attempt to create fear - and criticized them for that. Some participants in the June 12 day of action withstood intense harassment including being photographed, videotaped and questioned with one group actually being evicted due to the hysteria from the FBI.

Since the June 12, 2004 Day of Action, support for Jeff has continued to grow and strengthen. People all over the world see Jeff as a political prisoner and acknowledge that his sentence is meant as a deterrent to increased resistance to oppression. However, the political climate in the US and abroad has become more corrupt and repressive. On the home-front, the prison industrial complex continues to expand, repressive laws and legislation continue to get pushed by lying politicians, political prisoners are denied parole as the real criminals receive little or no punishment, and the already weak laws that exist to protect the environment are quickly being eliminated by blood-thirsty industry and the Bush administration. On the international level, the Bush regime is intensifying military aggression in Iraq, and planning future actions in Iran. The new Attorney General, Alberto Gonzales is attempting to undermine the Geneva Convention to justify the torture tactics used by US soldiers and prison guards at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. The conditions are ripe to expose the hypocrisy of the system. Opposition and dissent is needed now possibly more than ever before.

During the weekend of June 10-12th, 2005, social justice activists from across the world are called upon again to organize and show their outrage about Jeff's imprisonment and the continued abuse and isolation of dissident prisoners across the globe. State repression is meant as a deterrent to social and environmental movements all over. Jeff received a sentence of over 22 years for an action that harmed no one except for the pocketbook of a local car dealer. Typical arson charges in Oregon result in sentences of less than five years. The Judge in Jeff's case sentenced a man to 18 years last year for child molestation. Charles Graner Jr, responsible for the brutal torture and sexual harassment of Iraqi Prisoners of War at Abu Ghraib received only ten years! Every day in every city, cops receive little or no punishment for crimes against the public. This cannot be tolerated! Fight for the political prisoners because they have fought for you, against racism & poverty, war & imperialism, and the pillaging of the natural world. They're in there for us - we are out here for them!

June 10-12th, 2005, is a Weekend of Resistance with Jeff "Free" Luers. There is no central organizing body or group to check in with but the Jeff Luers Support Network can help by providing you with flyers, graphics, and merchandise such as videos, zines and stickers about Jeff and allies in the struggle. Begin planning your event now. Read more about Jeff's case at www.freefreenow.org. Read more about political prisoners at www.thejerichomovement.com. Plan an action that makes sense for your area: a demonstration, tree-sit, music festival, teach-in, stenciling campaign, rally, protests at an American consulate/embassy overseas, or public forum. Circulate petitions. Write letters to the Governor of Oregon asking him to look into Jeff's case. Contribute to Jeff's legal defense. Do what you think is appropriate. But please remember when planning an action or event think about how it could affect Jeff's upcoming appeal. Ask yourself: does this help or hurt Jeff? Does this strengthen the movement or weaken it in the long-term?



Jeff "Free" Luers was featured as a keynote speaker at the 23rd Annual Public Interest Environmental Law Conference in Eugene. A speech by Jeff was recorded over the phone from Oregon State Prison beforehand and aired at the conference to an audience of approximately 200. The speech addresses issues of global warming and environmental destruction, and the need for above and underground movements to compliment each other. The text of the speech is available from BTC upon request (please send a few stamps) and at www.freefreenow.org

JANUARY 2005: ABOUT THE RELEASE OF MY CO-DEFENDANT, CRAIG 'CRITTER' MARSHALL

Yesterday, on January 6th, 2005, Craig "Critter" Marshall, my co-defendant, walked out of prison after serving 5 and 1/2 years. I can only imagine what that felt like. Back in the day Critter was one of my closest friends, and while many are aware that he and I have had a falling out, I am truly glad his time is done and he has gone home. (My old friend if you are reading this, I wish you all the best.)

Now that Critter is out I can't help but wonder why I am still here. We were arrested at the same time, charged with the same offenses. Up until the very end he & I refused to cooperate with the state. Yet, the state in Critter's case decided that the exact same fire was only "conspiracy to commit arson" and "possession of destructive devices".

I've half a dozen theories as to why things played out the way they did. The one fact I know is not once did the state offer to treat my case as Critter's. I'm doing 17 years more for the same actions and same evidence. 22 years for actions that hurt no one and caused less than \$50k in damages.

Critter is home now where he belongs.

I'm counting on this movement. I'm counting on you to bring me home. I can't win this fight alone. I need your support. I need your agitation. Make the impossible reality. Rise up and free all political prisoners and prisoners of war.

We are in prison because we believe in dreams. We are in prison because we believe in freedom. We are in prison because we believe these things are worth fighting for. Dare to believe. Dare to resist.

Jeffrey "Free" Luers

Write to "Free":

Jeffrey Luers, #13797671, OSP, 2605 State Street, Salem, OR 97310 or email freefreenow.org

Write to "Critter":

Critter, c/o Green Anarchy, PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440 or email collective@greenanarchy.org

IN THE NEWS

RYAN LEWIS ARRESTED

On February 8, 2005, Ryan Daniel Lewis was arrested & remanded accused of involvement with a recent ELF attempted arson against a newly built apartment block in the Sacramento area. On February 24 he was formally charged with five counts of arson; he also faces three counts of attempted arson for his alleged role in another incident. At the site of the most recent action a graffiti message was sprayed on a wall that read: "We will win - ELF". Following Ryan's arrest a Grand Jury is being created to investigate all of these ELF actions. Lewis was denied release pending trial and is being held at the Sacramento County Jail.

CHRIS McINTOSH ARRESTED

On February 14, 2005, Chris McIntosh was arrested and remanded into custody accused of involvement in arson against a Seattle McDonalds in 2003. The action at the time was claimed jointly by the ELF & ALF.

According to mainstream media Chris' DNA & fingerprints were found on a spray can near the McDonalds. The mainstream media also reported that an anonymous ex-girlfriend of Chris' has claimed she acted as a lookout during the action.

DEFEND ROD CORONADO

In "Spirit of Freedom January 2005", the Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network reported that Rod Coronado along with John Richardson and Matthew Crozier have been charged with conspiracy to impede or injure an officer following their involvement in a non-violent sabotage action of a

mountain lion hunt. The action used traditional non-violent hunt sabotage tactics, which included laying a false scent to confuse the hounds. Initially Rod, Richard & Matt were charged with disabling a steel cable snare and entering a federal enclosure. However, because they refused to stop campaigning against the mountain lion hunts, these more serious charges have been brought about in a blatant attempt to shut them up.

Donations to help them in their court costs should be made to "Rod Coronado Legal Defense" and send to: Rod Coronado Legal Defense, POB 1925, Tucson, AZ 85706.



JOSH DEMMITT JAILED

In mid-February 2005 American ALF activist Josh Demmitt began a 30-month prison sentence having previously pleaded guilty to an arson attack on an animal testing facility. A website has been set up in support of Josh. This can be viewed at www.SupportJosh.org

TRE ARROW NEWS

International supporters of eco-defense remand prisoner Tre Arrow have set up a new biweekly e-mailing list for Tre. For more details check out www.trearrow.org

CASSIDY HARASSED BY FBI

In a letter dated January 18, 2005, Cassidy writes, "Today 2 FBI agents paid me a visit and expressed concern that I am linked to Islamic terrorists/Al Qaeda."

Cassidy was taken from his cell and brought into an interview room. "...A man and a woman in suits and looking the part came in the interview room and introduced themselves as agents so-and-so from the FBI Portland office...I immediately went into convict mode and said, 'I have no comment to make, I wish a lawyer present before any questioning, go ahead and kick rocks!'...The man seemed surprised, but gave me the pitch anyway: it seems that my [Cassidy's] name was 'found in connection to Islamic terrorists in Poland,' slightly misspelled..." and portions of the address slightly off ("EOSI" instead of EOCl, etc.)

Cassidy says, "This was the extent of the info he gave me, and as much as I wanted to ask stupid questions (and hear even more nonsense), I only said 'I have no comment' several times again. He then went into pig routine #3 and said, 'Well, then I will just have to assume that you are involved,' at which point I laughed and said, 'I am not involved with Al Qaeda, Islamic extremists, the 2nd gunman on the grassy knoll, or any other crazy shit like that!' He asked if I had any

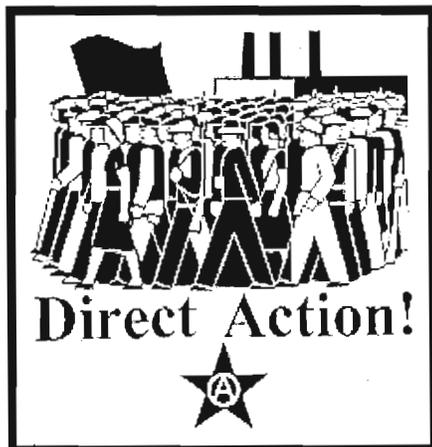
'reasonable explanation' for why my name would come up since, 'people do prisoner outreach stuff,' and I just repeated my unwillingness to comment. They left after less than 10 minutes, and I was brought back to my cell..."

These allegations are obviously false and ridiculous! As Cassidy puts it: "Anarchists supporting religious terrorists? NOT likely!" This visit by the FBI seems to be an intimidation attempt, a way to harass a known anarchist who has tried to help and organize other prisoners.

The FBI agents have not spoken to Cassidy again, and he has heard nothing more about the situation. Cassidy decided that he wanted as many people as possible to know about this FBI harassment.

If FBI agents can make such allegations against Cassidy, similar things may happen to other prisoners and to outside friends and supporters. If you are visited by the FBI be prepared to tell them that you have no comment and want a lawyer present for any questioning. Be firm.

Of course, Cassidy always loves to receive cards and letters from folks letting him know that we are watching his back and thinking of him. If you have time to drop him a line, tell him you've heard about this bogus visit and will be keeping up to date on the situation. It's good for him to know that people out here are ready to help.



Also, if you are affiliated with any publications, please consider publishing this update, so even more people will know about the incident.

Write to Cassidy at: Cassidy Wheeler
#14282456, OSP, 2605 State Street,
Salem, OR 97310.



FBI Director Defames Anarchists

The following comments are excerpts from the testimony of FBI Director Robert S. Mueller, III, given before the Senate Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate on February 16, 2005:

"Animal rights and environmental extremists, operating under the umbrella of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and Earth Liberation Front (ELF) utilize a variety of tactics against their targets, including arson, sabotage/vandalism, theft of research animals, and the occasional use of explosive devices.

Serious incidents of animal rights/eco-terrorism decreased in 2004, a fact we attribute to a series of law enforcement successes that are likely deterring large-scale arsons and property destruction. Following a rash of serious incidents of animal rights/eco-terrorism, including \$50 million arson in San Diego and two bombing incidents in the San Francisco area, law enforcement authorities achieved several significant successes, which have likely deterred additional terrorist activity. Despite these successes, we

anticipate that animal rights extremism and eco-terrorism will continue to threaten certain segments of government and private industry, specifically in the areas of animal research and residential/commercial development.

The potential for violence by anarchists and other emerging revolutionary groups, such as the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF), will continue to be an issue for law enforcement. The stated goals of the ABCF are 'the abolishment of prisons, the system of laws, and the Capitalist state.' The ABCF believes in armed resistance to achieve a stateless and classless society. ABCF has continued to organize, recruit, and train anarchists in the tactical use of firearms."

Books To Oregon Prisoners

Books To Oregon Prisoners is an all-volunteer project that was founded in order to work with the unique regulations concerning the shipment of books into Oregon State Prisons. Our primary goal is to empower incarcerated people in Oregon by sending in books and other educational materials. Equally important is creating a project run both by and for the communities most affected by the oppressive nature of the Prison Industrial Complex. While our focus is the involvement of the communities in North and Northeast Portland, where we are located, we strive to bring down barriers and involve all the communities affected by the incarceration crisis. For more info email bookstooregonprisoners@gmail.com or call (503) 288-9003. Write to Portland Books 2 Prisoners, PO Box 11222, Portland, OR 97211.



PICK UP THE WORK

Report on the Safiya Bukhari Human Rights Weekend

By two members of Break The Chains

Two members of Break The Chains traveled to New York City to attend the Jericho Movement's Human Rights Weekend to honor the work of the late Safiya Bukhari. Safiya, a former Black Panther, former political prisoner, representative of the Provisional Government of New Afrika and co-founder of the Jericho Movement for Amnesty for Political Prisoners, died on August 24th 2003 at age 53. In the aftermath of her death Jericho activists decided to plan an event honoring her life, and December 10th 2004 (International Human Rights Day) was selected as the day. Strategizing sessions for supporters of Political Prisoners (PPs) were scheduled for Saturday the 11th and Sunday the 12th, and a demonstration in support of PPs was also held in front of the NYC United Nations building on the evening of the 11th.

The weekend's events began Friday night with a cultural event at the John Jay Criminal Law School. Jericho member and WBAI radio host, Sally O'Brien emceed for the night and introduced most of the numerous speakers and musicians. An excellent video about Safiya was showed and recorded statements from PPs Jalil Muntaqim and Mumia Abu-Jamal were played. Speakers included Jericho co-chairperson and former political prisoner Herman Ferguson; a representative from Chicago's Irish Freedom Committee; Jericho co-chairperson Efa Nwanzana; Russell Shoats, Jr., son of political prisoner Russell Maroon Shoats, Native activist and radio show host Tiokasin Ghosthorse, and others. Excellent performances came from Palestinian hip hopper Ash-One, Boston Jericho's "Presente!" musical group, Puerto Rican poet Mariposa, and slam poet Hector from the Welfare Poets.

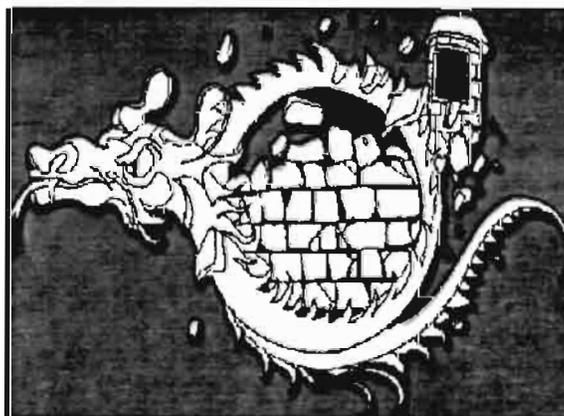
The event was good but the attendance was surprisingly small considering the size of New York and the amount of planning that happened before the event. The relative absence of young people in attendance was also disappointing. Without being overly critical, we would like to say that we found the location of this event to be strange. From what we understand, this criminal law school trains future FBI agents. Attendees also had to show identification to someone at the front desk of the school to get in to the event. Perhaps some people were intimidated from attending the event due to these issues?

On Saturday morning we went to a union building in Manhattan for a "networking session for activists". The

"networking session" seemed to be more of a reunion for Jericho and friends. This would have been fine were it not for the fact that people traveled to NYC from all over the country to strategize with other activists, and not merely to socialize.

After the "networking session" we made our way to the United Nations plaza for a demonstration. Despite a great line-up of speakers, as well as beautiful banners and posters, the demo could only be described as preaching to the converted. The U.N. building was closed, the crowd was tiny, and the few onlookers ignored us. In the future more thought should be given to location, time, and outreach, because demonstrations should be inspirational and not demoralizing.

The Sunday strategizing session fared much better than Saturday. It was positive to see more people present who are committed to this work. Despite a rough and scattered beginning, the session began to have a focus in discussing strategies for winning the release of political prisoners. We were able to have many meaningful conversations with people from Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Resistance N' Brooklyn, Critical Resistance, Irish Freedom Committee, Jericho and other groups.



We felt most excited learning about plans for a December 3rd 2005 "International Day of Solidarity with Political Prisoners" from all over the world, which came from a resolution passed at a recent symposium of the International League of People's Struggle in Holland. The day of solidarity will be spear-headed in the US by prison activists in the Bay Area who are also organizing the upcoming "From Attica to Abu

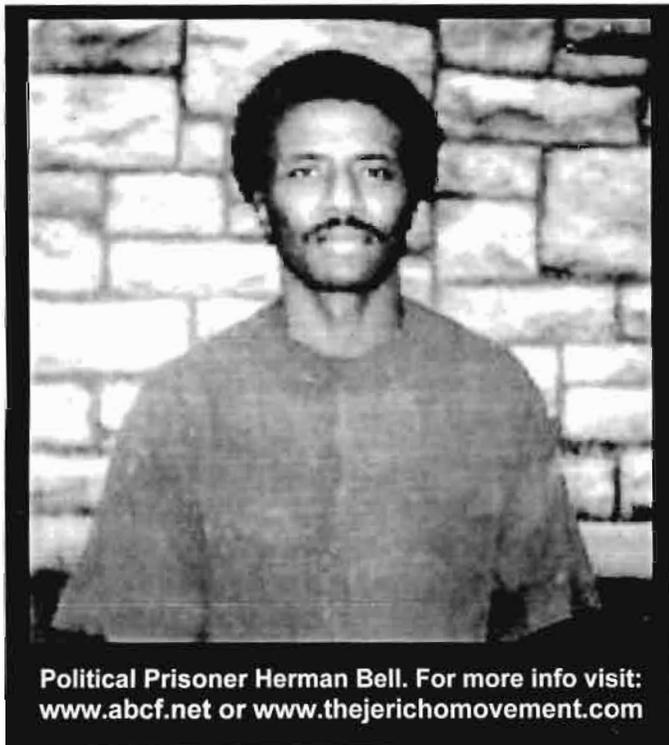
Ghraib" conference to be held this spring. It would have been nice if more time was spent discussing Jericho's promising "US Political Prisoners School Supplies Drive for AIDS Orphans in Africa" considering the first shipment of supplies was recently delivered to a community center run by exiled former Black Panthers in Tanzania. A growing number of organizations are supporting the campaign, but it has a long way to go before it can really meet its potential.

Overall, the conference didn't meet our (perhaps naïve) expectations, but we're glad we came because it allowed us to develop new relations with good people involved in prison activism and nurture old one's too. It's unclear to us if the shortcomings of the conference were a result of

poor planning, sectarianism, lack of interest in the issues at hand, or just plain burn out. It was probably a bit of all the above. Most of the Jericho folks have been doing this work for many years and they deserve a lot of applause for their tireless efforts. However, in the end, only time will tell if this conference made a difference or if it was another failed attempt to make North American radicals "pick up the work" and mount a real struggle to free all political prisoners.

After the conference, we were able to use a car loaned to us by a Jericho comrade to visit with political prisoners Herman Bell, Jalil Muntaqim, and David Gilbert. We had intended to also visit with Robert Seth Hayes, but upon arriving at Clinton Correctional Facility, David informed us that Seth had been moved to Wende (in Western New York) a few days prior. We had wonderful visits all around and great conversations. We brought along our friend Camilo, who is a tenant organizer in Massachusetts and was recently acquitted of charges stemming from the Republican National Convention from 2000 in Philadelphia. His presence added to a wonderful trip and we would like to thank Herman, Jalil, and David for such great visits. They are an inspiration. It is so necessary to visit our comrades behind bars and to learn from each other. We discussed our feelings about the Jericho conference, strategy ideas, the current work we are all involved with, as well as our personal lives and interests.

Overall, we had a great trip to the East Coast and feel lucky to have been able to go. We came home more determined to do this work and look forward to the "From Attica to Abu Ghraib" conference. For another account of the Safiya Bukhari Human Rights Weekend, please write to Sister Hira Al-Amin, 210 West Jolly Road, Lansing, MI 48010 (email: tea-tree@comcast.net).



Political Prisoner Herman Bell. For more info visit:
www.abcf.net or www.thejerichomovement.com

Call for International Day of Solidarity with Political Prisoners & Prisoners of War

The Bay Area Jericho Movement, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and the GABRIELA Network would like to encourage you and your organization to join us in organizing the *International Day of Solidarity with Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War* called for **Saturday, December 3, 2005**.

The idea of the *International Day of Solidarity with Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War* originated from a political prisoner in the Philippines, Donato Contiente. During a conversation with a delegation from the United States in the summer of 2004, Donato suggested *that we "have an international day of solidarity with political prisoners worldwide"*. While discussing the situation of political prisoners worldwide it was noted that although most countries have political prisoners, there is little knowledge of them outside their homelands. Also there is very little if any communication between political prisoners or political prisoner support groups of different countries. Each country could decide it's own way of observing this day, as could the political prisoners and support organizations. The impact of this work would be strengthened by communication between groups and coordinated media work to highlight the situation of political prisoners internationally.

In November human rights activists met in Holland at an anti-imperialist conference: the ILPS-International League of Peoples' Struggles. There, representatives from the Philippines, US, Canada, Mexico, Iraq, Palestine, Italy, Spain, Mexico, Colombia and Turkey agreed to make Donato's idea a reality on December 3, 2005. Additional outreach will broaden this concept to include political prisoners and their movements in many other countries.

We are looking for your support in planning and coordinating activities and actions for the *Day of Solidarity* in the US. At present, people have shown interest in organizing regional demonstrations and programs in Oakland, Atlanta, Chicago, New York City, and Eugene, Oregon. We hope you and your organizations want to organize actions and activities in other cities as well. We ask that our efforts be coordinated to maximize the impact of our efforts. At this time you can:

- a) Organize Endorsements for the *Day of Solidarity*
- b) Commit to organize local or regional actions
- c) Help to organize one of the projected regional activities.

In Oakland we are considering a demonstration at the Oakland Federal Building on Friday, December 2nd, which will also initiate a one-day solidarity fast with our imprisoned sisters and brothers and a community event on Saturday December 3rd to educate and build an ever-stronger support movement, demanding the freedom for all political prisoners and prisoners of war.

We are anxious to hear from you. We welcome your ideas and suggestions. If you have contacts with any international, national or local prisoner support movements, please let us know. We are aiming to get as much feedback as possible from all of you by the end of March 2005.

All correspondence should be mailed to:
Jericho Movement, PO Box 3585 Oakland, CA 94509. All email correspondence can be sent to:
kaliaw@sbcglobal.net.



THE ANTI-AIM TIDE IS RISING

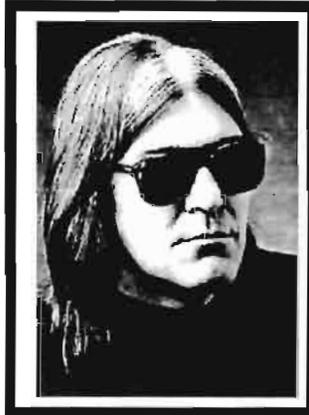
All of us who surround those who were involved in American Indian Movement since the early 70's have known it was coming, or rather "they" would come for them again. There is no shock in the recent campaign to discredit Ward Churchill. Most of all, we are sure Mr. Churchill himself knew it was coming sooner or later. We are sure Ward is at home asking himself questions such as: why now, what will be gained by disabling me at this time and how will this negatively affect the movement? Most of all, like any good warrior, we hope he finds himself asking how he can make this work for the movement's benefit. Mr. Churchill has co-authored books which guaranteed he would be attacked by his favorite organization, the FBI.

His contributions academically to the Indian movement, whether it be AIM or a generation of like-minded thinkers, has been vast. Without books such as *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* and *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret War Against Dissent in the United States* our generation and those younger would not have a map by which we can predict the government's response and how they will work to stop Indians being outspoken. Simply put, we firmly believe that many of AIM's figureheads are modern day Indian heroes. We cannot sit by and watch our government continue to destroy Native Americans.

Mr. Churchill's writings are motivational in a way the government does not appreciate. His writings are critical of the government. We believe any educated Indian would have to agree with his works and themes though not necessarily embrace every point. We believe we need people such as Mr. Churchill who are not afraid to exercise their First Amendment Right of Freedom of Speech. American Indians need to feel free to speak.

Please note the newspaper reporters seem to forget how long ago Mr. Churchill wrote the 9-11 article. It is also important to note how the mainstream press has totally misinterpreted and misreported Mr. Churchill's statements and intent. We challenge those who have not read Mr. Churchill to read what he has written and draw their own conclusions and not be swayed by the propaganda being spread by the mainstream media.

Our question is why all of a sudden is the press attacking Mr. Churchill for issues that happened more than a year ago? This is not news - these are old issues. We should all be asking ourselves, why now? Our belief is, that as we await the results of the John Graham extradition hearing, the United States wishes to raise anti-AIM sentiments hoping to use the John Graham extradition as a vehicle to attack people such as Ward Churchill and Leonard Peltier.



We would like to remind the older generation of AIM of allegiance and honor. Don't forget, years of knowing each other, and years of trying to have Leonard Peltier freed means there is a spider web of relationships which the government is clearly trying to untangle and frame Leonard as a patsy.

We are not saying Anna Mae does not deserve justice. We believe she was a loyal AIM woman and she should be treated as such. We believe that those involved in what happened to her owe her

family answers, very soon. We hope her family still believes as she did, in the cause and rights of Indians. Please beware the government will use Anna Mae's murder, 9-11 and anything else they find inflammatory right now to turn the tide against AIM and against Leonard Peltier. Our phones are tapped, of this we are sure, so the FBI clearly knows lately those at the LPDC have made some great contacts internationally. We assure you they want to turn the tide against Leonard and AIM right now, they must undo all our work - they must keep us down. Remember these guys earn a paycheck to suppress us - we have nothing but pocket lint because it is our lives. But if we do not let the rising anti-AIM tide drown our spirits we can still win. We say good luck Mr. Churchill. We personally like the way you exercise your first amendment rights.

From: info@leonardpeltier.org

For more information: www.coloradoaim.org

"Those in power may kill with impunity, but when those lower on the hierarchy fight back, they are committing blasphemy and must be eliminated. Even to acknowledge that this is what is happening is itself a form of blasphemy, and those who speak the unspeakable - that those who are being terrorized by those in power have the right to fight back - must be silenced." - Derrick Jensen.

Decolonization of Schools & Trauma

This might be the darkest hour in recent memory, but, for Native people, our removal from and occupation of our lands is still the darkest hour in our collective history. The analysis of "What went wrong at Red Lake?" fed to us by the mainstream media is superficial and dismissive. The usual diagnosis is applied: the shooter was into heavy metal music, Goth culture (dressed in black), had racial supremacist leanings (never mind that the preoccupation with blood quantum/racial purity has been imposed on us by the federal government to ensure our biological extinction), and other students picked on him, with the additional problems of living in a high poverty area and going to a low performing school. Problem analyzed, riddle solved, and on to the next news item; while WE still have the dead, the wounded, and a shaken and traumatized community to care for.

It seems that with all the mounting violence in schools, increased security, and declining quality someone should have by now examined the school system itself as a possible suspect in this problem. This would be the most logical direction for any astute and concerned school district, parents and community. The fact that no one has bothered to make available how schools disguise their agendas should be examined. For example, the No Child Left Behind Act has hidden clauses that stipulate that the funded are required to disclose personal students' information to military recruiters (with an opt out clause that schools are even more secretive about). Also, the schools must take performance tests and if those are not up to a standard the schools lose money. These facts are probably not well known because schools remain closed communities, resistant to any real promising changes to their territory. This puts undue pressure on almost all of those attending schools nationwide. Indian Schools, under funded and with high military recruitment rates, are the most to feel the weight with possible long-term impact for those that enter the military and end up in combat. In a perverse twist, the students at Red Lake, in their grief and desperation, have become perfect targets for military recruiters.

To add insult to injury the FBI is in charge of investigating this tragedy. This is the same agency that unleashed a reign of terror on Native reservations in general and Pine Ridge, SD, in particular, pulled every possible trick to incarcerate Leonard Peltier (also an Anishinabe) and keep him in prison, killed Joe Stuntz, and executed a vicious campaign to hunt down "AIM terrorists". The FBI's involvement is due to create even more trauma in the Red Lake community that the people will have to cope with.

The economic condition, so heavily underscored by the media, found on most reservations should not be the main focus in this time of grief for the Red Lake community and all the so closely knit Native communities in this country. It should only be mentioned as one of the many hardships brought about by U.S. colonial policies imposed on our indigenous peoples. This continuous focus on our material poverty does an injustice to our issues as human beings. Nonetheless, we are rich in our sense of who we are and wealthy in our understanding of our culture, our ceremonies, and our resistance. This is what will help the families, devastated Anishinabe community, and greater indigenous community.

Until there is an approach that addresses the issues of historical and current contemporary traumas, relevant to our histories and that supports our humanity, we will see our students impaired further by their collective experiences in these school systems. They remain in jeopardy and at serious risks for outbreaks like this in the future. The school system is the catalyst for these eruptions, and for Native students this adds to a legacy of forced "education" that more resembled "re-education camps" than the benign system that is proffered by the mainstream. Also, placing all of our trust in the security apparatus is not enough. People power and security in forms other than punitive have to be exercised. Re-addressing interventions, from a healthier perspective, is the best practice approach.

Schools produce this trauma in their methodologies and strict adherence to a system of enforced conformity. Those most resistant to this indoctrinational approach are the most at-risk, although all students in this system are at-risk. The first bully is the system and its enforcers. The trauma is perpetrated by the methods of enforcement, unattainable goals under current conditions, and for the Native population, a colonial curriculum that negates our humanity. In addition, we must recognize the additional trauma from the past, still passed on generation-to-generation, in which the schools were used to remove our children, destroy our families, and beat our language and cultures out of us. The damage these policies have done to us is incalculable and it remains to be addressed as our families remain broken, our children are still being removed at disproportionate rates, and our cultures have significant gaps that keep us from following the original instructions given to each of our Nations by the Creator.

Mitakuye Oyasin - Russ Redner

Breaking Amerikkka's Chains

I have been one of Amerikkka's prisoners for over 400 years,
The blood and tears of my people are her lakes and rivers,
She claims to be the apotheosis of Liberation;
When fact is, she enslaved two-thirds of the Black Nation,
Plundered the Redman of his Land,
And placed him on a reservation.

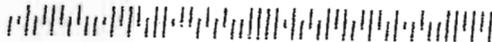
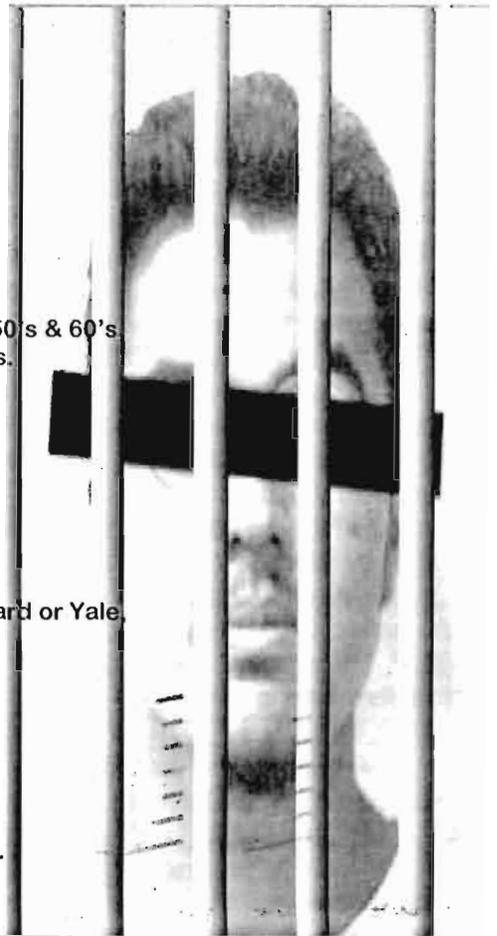
I can still smell the fresh blood of Afrikans & Natives,
Who died in Amerikkka's hands from years passed,
Because they wanted to be free.
And I can still hear the crescendo speeches from the brothers & sisters of the 50's & 60's
Who vociferated: "I AM A MAN, I AM A WOMAN," as they marched in the streets.

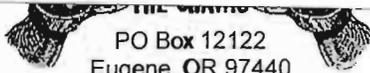
Blood shot eyes from cold emotions & sleepless nights;
I can't recall the last time I cried. I can't recall the last time I laughed.
Angry frowns on the faces of prisoners, define long life struggles.
Ancient memories as a youngsta,
Warm hugs & kisses from the embrace & lips of my mother.

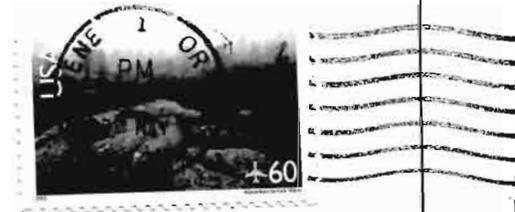
Screams from new born babies spell Revolution.
Conscious Black men driven by hope & rage, in search of a solution.
Generations of young Black males with high esteem & dreams of going to Harvard or Yale
But instead they end up in one of Amerikkka's prison cells.

Look at me,
My face is the face Amerikkka doesn't want the world to see.
Listen to me,
My voice is the voice Amerikkka doesn't want the world to hear.
Who am I?
I'm that brother.
That Alkebulanian (African) man whose mission is to break Amerikkka's chains.

Composed: Kamau Tebogo Zulu Damali
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