

Obama's Election: Lessons for Defeating White Supremacy and Rebuilding Revolutionary Resistance

by
Michael Novick, Anti-Racist Action-Los Angeles/People Against Racist Terror (ARA-LA/PART)

The election of Barack Obama has been greeted in a variety of ways: elation and relief (tempered by fear of a racist backlash or assassination attempt) by supporters, particularly US Africans; predictions of enhanced recruitment opportunity by organized white supremacists; doomsday predictions by conservatives. On the left there have been “exposes” of Obama’s Zionism, militarism and dismissal of the particular needs of Black people or the working class. A group of DC anarchists has called for a disruption of his inaugural.

But any analysis needs to start from this reality: masses of people in the US feel they have helped make and change history by electing Obama. His victory is indeed historic in many ways. It required the largest voter turnout ever, and the highest percentage of registered voters to vote in decades. Obama gained a clear majority, the highest percentage by a Democrat since FDR except for Johnson’s landslide after the JFK assassination. He ran the most expensive campaign in history. He is the first “bi-racial” (called Black or African-American) president-elect, and incidentally the first child of an immigrant, the first Hawaiian-born, one of the youngest, and by far the least “embedded,” president. Moreover, his was the first victory by a self-proclaimed ‘anti-war’ candidate in the midst of a war. For the first time, Obama broke through the white supremacist ‘fix’ embedded in the electoral college system, in which white bloc voting in the South leveraged the electoral weight of out-numbered and/or disenfranchised Blacks to control the electoral college. Although Obama lost the white vote overall because of the strength of white support for McCain in the South, he ran at least as well as any white Democrat in the past four decades, and with the upsurge in the Black vote and the new demographic of Mexicano/indigenous voters disproportionately in his favor, he broke through to victory.

But Obama’s victory hardly signals that we are a “post-racial” society, as is evidenced by the self-contradictory self-congratulations of those who proclaim that “by electing the first Black president” we have shown that we are “color-blind.” Exit polls showed that about a fifth of ‘white’ voters acknowledged that “race” was a significant factor. Interestingly, of those, 30% voted for Obama. One explanation of this is the fact that Obama’s race made his intellect acceptable. US voters would never have elected a ‘white’ candidate as obviously intelligent as Obama. Yet they accepted and understood that a ‘Black’ candidate would have to be twice as smart, twice as cool, as any ‘white’ to have a chance to succeed.

Paradoxically but perhaps most essentially, Obama’s election is also a manifestation of the extent of the radical left’s weakness, irrelevance and inability to communicate. Over the past eight years of Bush misrule, what effective strategies or serious ability to develop a countervailing force or consciousness has the left or the anarchist movement manifested? In that vacuum, people made a judgment that Obama represented the best hope for the kind of change that could be achieved through electoral means. This was not merely because he was ‘Black,’ but because he was intelligent, calm, organized, and an effective and reassuring campaigner. McCain’s charges of ‘inexperience’ didn’t stick because Obama was attractive exactly because he was a relative outsider not deeply corrupted by long tenure in Washington, DC or in office. His mild centrist critique of the Iraq war made ‘sense’ in a context in which the anti-war movement had proven incapable of making a dent or marshaling an extra-parliamentary opposition and resistance to the war. Within the Democratic Party spectrum -- and the anti-war movement has been tailing the Democrats for years -- he was the electable ‘opponent’ of the Iraq war.

To imagine that a proclamation of opposition to Obama’s inauguration as a capitalist and statist will do anything to overcome the left’s weakness, irrelevance and inability to communicate -- in fact, that it will do anything other than deepen and intensify those failures -- is the height of arrogance. I have a different take on what we have to do or learn in response to Obama’s victory. It starts with the perspective that the greatest on-going weakness of the left strategically and politically is a refusal to recognize the nature of this society as an Empire based on white-supremacist settler colonialism. Related to that is our greatest tactical flaw, an inability to practice authentic self-criticism, through which we learn from our errors and defeats in order to eventually overcome them and win. Our failure to do that has engendered a deep defeatism in masses of people -- manifest as accommodation to Empire and unwillingness to struggle against or even make a sharp break with the system.

One thing this election has demonstrated is how far into the past the revolutionary militance of the civil rights and Black power movements and the mass anti-imperialist opposition to the Vietnam War and domestic colonialism have receded. McCain’s inability to make the Bill Ayers smear stick to Obama was because not only Obama but most of the electorate was no older than 8, or perhaps not yet born, when Ayers was an armed-propaganda radical. That period of revolutionary optimism, when the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army or the WUO were the tip of the iceberg of a massive upwelling of rebelliousness and armed resistance, is now ancient history.

(Speaking of white privilege and class, Obama never would have associated with ex-BLA members, nor would any have been on the board of an Annenberg charity.)

No amount of posturing could “Recreate 68” (or even 2000) in Denver for the DNC or in DC for the inaugural. 47% of high school seniors in the US today were registered to vote in time for the election, and I suspect an overwhelming majority of them cast their first ballots. They were born while the first George Bush was president! Who better to speak to them than Anti-Racist Action, which has historically been an attractor of high schoolers? Yet ARA’s current ability to do outreach, education, agitation and organizing in high schools (or prisons, factories, community colleges or the military) is miniscule. The DC call relates that anarchists opposed and disrupted the last two inaugurations, and therefore should do the same again. This flawed reasoning lacks a material analysis of the consciousness of masses of people in relation to the electoral process and the presidency. Bush’s two stolen victories undermined the authenticity and legitimacy of the electoral process and of the imperial presidency. For his first inaugural, he was anointed president by the Supreme Court after having lost the popular vote. For his second, he was plagued by an unpopular war and evidence of vote flipping and vote suppression. Protesters and disrupters were speaking for millions when we denounced the inaugurations and the presidency, and our message fell on receptive ears.

The current situation is far different, and blaming it on the voters is another example of the left’s lack of self-criticism and ability to grow. Obama’s victory signals a new lease on life for the presidency, electoral politics and the two-party system. Obama won by a clear majority, in which voter suppression was a negligible factor and in which all minor parties together barely hit 1% of the vote, including McKinney, Nader, Barr and Baldwin combined. His inauguration, even apart from the historicity of his “Blackness,” is being welcomed by the overwhelming majority of the US population as proof of the “mystery and majesty” of electoral democracy. In that context, a disruption wouldn’t express the unease of the general population in a radical and uncompromising way, but would be taken as an alienating slap in the face. It wouldn’t be seen as a call to a higher form of direct democracy, but as a rejection of the popular will expressed through a peaceful, honest and democratic election and transfer of power.

Now is the time for a sober reassessment of how to grapple with these new realities. Obama did not merely collect millions of dollars from hundreds of thousands of people -- he established a relationship with them. He organized effectively tens of thousands of volunteers, and turned out tens of millions of people to vote. Why has the left or the anarchist movement been incapable of inspiring, stimulating or organizing anywhere near that level of support, involvement, voluntarism or participation? How can we start to do so?

Obama accurately read the demographic, technological and ideological changes that are taking place in the U.S. and effectively offered himself and his campaign as a vehicle for implementing or realizing some of the aspirations those changes have generated. Obama seized on the opportunity of the latest and deepest capitalist economic crisis to develop a compelling narrative of how a lack of regulation, a lack of attention to the ‘middle class,’ and an arrogant unilateralism in ‘foreign policy’ weakened the economy, national security and the fiscal stability of the state. Neither the statist left nor the anarchists are anywhere close to having the intellectual, political or organizational capacity to challenge that narrative or that definition of “change.”

Unless and until we engage in a thoroughgoing self-criticism and re-orientation towards an anti-colonialist politics of decolonization as the basis of an effective anti-capitalism, we will be playing with ourselves on the sidelines of history.

We need to put forward and undertake effective organizing strategies, not merely demands, for self-determined direct action against economic and environmental devastation, mass incarceration, militarism, occupation and anti-immigrant hysteria. We need to participate in building self-reliant communities of resistance.

It is only oppressed and exploited people who can make revolution, and save the planet by saving ourselves. Go to the 25% of ‘homeowners’ who owe more on their mortgage than their home is worth and unite them with the homeless. Go to the 30% of “War on Terror” veterans who report no earned wage income, and who have massive unemployment rates, and help unite them with GI resisters, with teens resisting recruitment, or with millions of prisoners and their families. Then we can begin to make some history of our own.



Close the Control Units

by
Bonnie Kerness, AFSC Prison Watch Project

Excerpts from remarks in June 2008 at the AFSC StopMAX Conference

In the mid '80s I received a letter from Ojore Lutalo who had just been placed in the Management Control Unit at Trenton State Prison. He asked what a control unit was, why he was in there and how long he would have to stay. We began hearing from people throughout the country saying that they were prisoners being held in extended isolation for political reasons. We also heard from jailhouse lawyers, Islamic militants and prisoner activists – many of whom found themselves locked down in 24/7 solitary confinement. The AFSC began contacting people inside and outside the prisons to see who was interested in working specifically on control unit isolation issues, and in 1994 (after eight years of organizing) we hosted the formation of the National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Prisons. This was done with the help of Coalition to End the Marion Lockdown, Komboa Ervin (one of the Marion Brothers), Corey Weinstein of California Prison Focus, Alejandro Molina from the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, students from Oberlin College, the Anarchist Black Cross, the United Church of Christ, Yaki Owusu of Spear and Shield, the input of the women held in small group isolation at Lexington KY, and many others.

The history of the National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Prisons really began with the movements of the '60s and '70s. My generation believed each of us was free to dissent politically. People acted out this belief in a number of ways. Native peoples contributed to the formation of the American Indian Movement dedicated to self determination; Puerto Ricans joined the movement to free the island from US colonialism; white students formed SDS and other

groups, while others worked in the southern Civil Rights movements. This was also a time that the New Afrikan Independence Movement reasserted itself, the Black Panther Party for Self Defense was formed, and there was a distinct rise in the prisoner's rights movement.

The government, in response to this massive outcry against inequities and for national liberation, utilized an FBI Counter Intelligence Program called COINTELPRO, which had as its objective the crippling of the Black Panther Party and other radical forces. TV news had graphic pictures of state troopers, police, FBI, and the National Guard killing our peers. I saw on the evening news the bullet holes left as police fired into Panther Fred Hampton's sleeping body. Young people protesting the Vietnam War were killed by the National Guard on the Jackson and Kent State campuses. Civil rights workers were killed with impunity. We felt as if there was no opportunity to stop mourning because each day another activist was dead. These killings and other acts of oppression led to underground formations such as the Black Liberation Army and the Weather Underground.

Over the years that this COINTELPRO was carried out, many of those young people who weren't murdered were put in prisons across the country. Some, now in their 60s and 70s, are still there. Those directives are still being carried out, only now we have Homeland Security monitoring what it calls "radical prisoners". The US denied that there were people being held for political reasons. But there was no way to work with prisoners without hearing repeatedly of the existence of such people – including individuals who clearly fit the United Nations definition of political prisoners and prisoners of war – and the particular treatment they endured once in prison. As early as 1978, Andrew Young, US Ambassador to the United Nations, was quoted in newspapers saying, "There are hundreds,

perhaps thousands of people I would describe as political prisoners" in US prisons.

Across the nation, we saw enhanced use of sensory deprivation and isolation units for such people, and it was this growing "special treatment" which we began monitoring. At the time, Ralph Arons, a former warden at Marion, was quoted at a congressional hearing as saying, "The purpose of the Marion Control Unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in society at large."

For those of us who have been in the struggle for decades, the deliberate use of long term sensory deprivation is haunting. People that we've known, worked with and loved have been, and some are still being held in this manner. The names – Ojore Lutalo; Sundiata Acoli, for whom the Management Control Unit in NJ was built in 1975; Assata Shakur, who was held for over five years in isolation. Albert Nuh Washington, who died in prison; Geronimo Pratt and Dhoruba Bin Wahad, who were eventually exonerated and released; Marshall Eddie Conway, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Mumia Abu Jamal; Leonard Peltier, David Gilbert, Marilyn Buck, Sekou Odinga, Ray Luc Levasseur, Kazi Toure, Masai Ehehosi; Oscar Lopez Rivera, Alejandrina Torres, Dylcia Pagan, Bashir Hameed, Standing Deer, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin; Richard Williams, Tom Manning, Merle Africa and the rest of the MOVE Africas, Susan Rosenberg, Laura Whitehorn, Linda Evans, Sylvia Baraldini, Imam Jamil Al-Amin - these names and dozens of others haunt the spaces of every control unit, SHU, DDU, ad seg unit and special housing unit in the country. No matter what name they are given, their purpose is the same as it is in Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo – the breaking of minds. For every name I've read, there are a thousand more.

For people of my generation, this work is done with a

lifetime passion and an understanding that the work is not risk free. We've made a promise to those dead and alive to abolish these torture chambers. People throughout the world are beginning to understand what the prisoners have been saying to us for decades about the oppressive tactics of the US government. The department of corrections is more than a set of institutions, it is a state of mind. It is that state of mind which has expanded the use of isolation, the use of torture and the Counter Intelligence Program, as part of Homeland Security, against activists, both inside and outside the walls. Ojore Lutalo, the man who first contacted us in 1986, was released from the control unit via litigation in 2002 after 16 years in isolation. In 2004, he let us know that he had been placed back into the Management Control unit with no charges pending or any explanation. When I called the Department of Corrections, it took many conversations before I was bluntly told that this was upon the order of Homeland Security, that he is one of a number of prisoners across the country who they have targeted in this way.

The latest progression of control units are called "security threat group management units". This is particularly egregious because it is the government which gets to define what a "security threat group" is. According to a national survey done by the Department of Justice in 1997, the Departments of Corrections of Minnesota and Oregon named all Asians as gangs, which Minnesota further compounds by adding all Native Americans. The State of NJ DOC lists the Black Cat Collective as a gang. The Black Cat Collective is my free foster son along with two friends who put on Afro-Centric cultural programs in libraries. Because my own background stems from the Civil Rights Era, I am very mindful of who is considered a "security threat" to this country and how they are treated.

Prison gang policies occur within the context of larger society and the wider criminal justice system, and the growth of security threat group management units are part of the larger policy agenda regarding US prisons. One of the standards that the federal government sets in order for states to receive prison construction subsidies is to mandate the building of supermax prisons or security threat group management units.

One of the things that makes this such an exciting time to re-new our efforts through Stopmax, is that we now have the growing understanding of the validity of United Nations international law. The Convention Against Torture, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, The UN Convention on Political and Civil Rights and other international and regional treaties help give us a new set of legal, educational and organizing tools for social change.

Turning the Tide: Journal of Anti-Racist Action, Research & Education needs your help!

Postal and printing costs are up. Dozens of new prisoners ask to get free subs every month. Friends of ARA-LA/PART are either in prison, like General T.A.C.O./Wolverine Shakur of the Black Riders Liberation Party, or facing prosecution for anti-fascist political activity. We had to postpone this issue again because of a lack of sufficient funds and staffing. Our last appeal resulted in only about a dozen new subscriptions and donations. As things stand, we will have to revert to quarterly publication next year, down from six issues a year.

What can you do?

We rely entirely on subscriptions and reader donations to publish. We've been coming out for 21 years, distributing thousands of copies free to prisoners, anti-racists and other concerned people without partisan subsidy, government funds or corporate grants. We depend entirely on you, the reader, to keep printing hard-hitting anti-racist, anti-colonialist analysis. If you like what you're reading –

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EDITORIAL OVERVIEW ON THIS ISSUE:

This issue of *Turning the Tide*, in the aftermath of the elections, is devoted primarily to commentaries, writings and analyses by prisoners. If we are looking for the seeds of revolutionary resistance, behind the prison walls is one place we can find them. Many prisoners of all nationalities are engaged in a process of personal transformation, political education and strategic organizing behind the walls while seeking to rebuild contact and communication through the walls. *TTT* hopes to contribute in some small way to that process, and to begin to identify other sectors of our communities open a radical personal and social transformation in the coming months. We invite your feedback, both to ARA-LA/PART and to the individual prisoners whose work is included in this issue.

New Afrikan Community Emergency Response Network Manifesto: Power to the People Who Don't Fear Freedom!

by
Abdul Olugbala Shakur

When did we find out that this government did not give a damn about New Afrikans or poor people? Before or after Hurricane Katrina? We as New Afrikan freedom fighters and activists knew this before Hurricane Katrina. We knew that institutionalized racism was alive and well. So I ask, how can we as vanguards blame an oppressive government or white men, when we had failed to act? We knew our people were not adequately prepared for a natural disaster or crisis, but we did nothing to prepare them. I don't excuse myself; I should not have waited 12 years, to reintroduce this proposal. So I must also apologize to our people for failing to act on their behalf. Being in solitary confinement for the past 25 years is no excuse. By no means am I excusing the government from responsibility, but as a vanguard, I don't expect the enemy of New Afrikan self-determination to save us or to do for us what we should be doing for ourselves.

The need for this manifesto is no longer an option; it's now a necessity. Hurricane Katrina exposed our vulnerability in the worst way. It took the needless loss of lives for us to finally come to the realization of the need for our communities to prepare ourselves. We must now act in our own best interest and develop and prepare our own emergency response services and network.

The key to surviving a natural disaster, or at least minimizing fatalities, is organization and preparedness. The purpose of this discussion paper is to facilitate the dialogue; identify the areas that need to be addressed and analyzed as it pertains to preparation; and provide an example of the functional infrastructure that must be established to guarantee an effective emergency response. The dialogue must be designed towards developing a working blueprint for a New Afrikan Community Emergency Response Network.

To avoid bureaucratic stagnation, each state should have its own network. This network will be responsible for preparing every New Afrikan community in their state for a crisis or a natural disaster. Members of this network will be elected by our communities. We will develop a ballot system that would allow our people to vote. Only those who live in the New Afrikan community will be eligible to sit on the board. They must be well-known community activists with a history of serving our community to community will have the power to remove any board member, and they are dissatisfied with. The NACERN will work with other community family emergency services, but will not be subordinate to them, nor will we be dictated to or serve as a government puppet.

Every city with a New Afrikan community will be eligible to form an emergency response committee. The same rules will apply to ERC members: they will be unknown, community activists, with no affiliation to the government or law enforcement. All committees will be responsible to the state network, and they will be required to file a monthly report. The status report will consist of all relevant information, from their failures or successes, as well as their financial reports.

Emergency Survey Unit

The ESU will be activated before during and after a natural disaster. It will monitor all local dams, levees, etc. the ESU will also search for structural damage in all local housing projects, apartments, rules, bridges, freeways, overpasses, etc. The ESU will conduct monthly tests of all drinking water, especially during and after a crisis. The ESU will also identify areas that are prone to floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, snow and/or wildfires. This unit will file a report every 90 days detailing their findings.

Emergency Mobile Clinics.

During Katrina, many are people were unable to reach a hospital or receive medical attention. As a result, many of our people suffered or died. The EMC will be fully equipped and capable of performing certain emergency procedures. The EMCs will be dispatched to the hardest hit areas, especially those in rural areas.

Emergency Ambulance Services

We will convert vans and boats into fully equipped ambulances. These will be active all year round, but during a crisis or natural disaster, their priority would be to reach the most vulnerable and to transport the injured to emergency medical stations or emergency mobile clinics. There will also be emergency medical staff assistants, thoroughly trained in first aid and other medical treatment, at least 3 on every block. They will be responsible for identifying the most vulnerable on

their block, such as the handicapped and elders, and for developing a database of all those on their block with some type of health problem. We will develop a computer program to secure this data against theft.

Emergency Evacuation Network

The EEN will develop an effective evacuation plan and emergency manual for the community and distribute copies, conduct evacuation drills two or three times a year, and coordinate the evacuation of the community in an actual crisis or emergency. It will establish a working relationship with the school district that would allow the use of school buses for evacuation.

Emergency Expropriation Unit

We don't agree with the government position on "looting" during a crisis or natural disaster. We also disagree with looting as an effective means to obtain sustenance for survival during such a situation. We have a more effective method to achieve this objective. During a crisis, the EEU will dispatch a unit to all the affected grocery, hardware and clothing stores along with a unit of the emergency security network to secure the businesses while the EEU expropriates the necessary supplies, such as necessary food, water or other beverages; clothing, blankets and towels; matches, flashlights and flares; paper and plastic plates, utensil and bags; grills, fire extinguishers, generators, radios, tools, etc. An emergency logistics management network will coordinate the distribution of these supplies to those in need. The EEU will inventory each item that was expropriated by the EEU and provide copies to the businesses affected. We believe this will minimize unnecessary looting.

The Emergency Security Network will have an armed division and an unarmed division. It will be a legitimate community-based security network, not cops, informers or puppets for law enforcement. It will be a community-controlled network activated during emergencies and natural disasters. Unfortunately, there was some truth to reports that at least some of our young people did victimize our women, children, elders and the community during the Katrina disaster. We will dispatch armed security units to all relief centers and evacuee shelters and ensure that young thugs will not be allowed to victimize our people. The unarmed division will help the emergency evacuation network evacuate and secure our communities.

Emergency Information Center

Accurate information facilitates a community's endeavors to prepare itself and respond appropriately to a natural disaster or other emergency. One of our primary weaknesses is a lack of necessary information or the ability to disseminate it to our people. The EIC will develop a survival manual that will cover the distinctive

characteristics calling for a particular response for each potential crisis or disaster. It will also produce a directory listing the addresses, phone numbers, emails and web-sites for all our emergency response services. Many families were separated and children lost during Katrina. The EIC will develop a New Afrikan family central database. Each family in the database will have their own personal emergency instructions based on their particular circumstances, with their own personal, secure, password-protected access...

This proposal embodies the seven principles of Kwanzaa.

Unity: It will unite us around a common cause.

Self-determination: It is all about saving ourselves and doing for ourselves.

Collective work and responsibility: This will bring us together functionally as a collective body in the service of the community.

Cooperative economics: This about building our own enterprises and pooling our money to finance those projects and initiatives.

Purpose: This plan would help create a social climate where each member of the community can consciously contribute to rebuilding the community.

Creativity: Developing out New Afrikan Emergency Response Network will test and enhance our creativity.

Faith: This project would help us to believe in ourselves again.

My people, as New Afrikan freedom fighters, we don't have the option to blame the government. To be your vanguard and warrior, we must be your first-line responders. I offer this manifesto as my contribution. Why do I say New Afrikan? One of the methods employed by the slave-master was to place slaves from different villages, towns and nations together on plantations to try to prevent unity and strip our ancestors of their cultural identity, including their language, religion and social norms. That reduced the risk of organized slave rebellions; they also hoped to create a mind-set vulnerable to being indoctrinated into a slave mentality. What was not foreseen by the architects of this genocidal system was that it was the catalyst for the development of a New Afrikan. This nation was synthesized from those different sources, not the same as those who came from Africa, but indigenous to the new social-political reality, culturally evolving in a new world. We as a people are descendants of those New Afrikans. I wrote this mandate from that perspective, a contribution to a future in which we New Afrikans are powerful, independent, and masters of our destiny!

Excerpted by the editor from a manifesto by Abdul Olugbala Shakur, s/n James Harvey, #C-48884/ D-4-112 (SHU) Pelican Bay State Prison, PO Box 7500, Crescent City CA 95532.

Editor replies:

This excerpt from a much longer, densely hand-written document sent in by brother Shakur speaks volumes to the enormous gap in communication between those inside and outside the walls, and between the hopes and desires of oppressed people and our current capacity to realize them. The institutions and procedures outlined in this plan are far beyond the current or near-future capacities of our movements to implement. The pressing question is, how do we close the gap? How do we integrate prisoners into a grounded dialogue about where we are, where we need to be to win freedom, and how we are going to get there? Our theorizing and strategizing inside and out must be based on accurate grasp of material reality and the historical moment, a concrete analysis of concrete conditions and class and national relationships. What sectors can start to move and serve as a motor to turn over the engine of mass action? We invite response.

Racist Resistance to Prisoner Unity

By Brennan MacLean

Racism in prison. I'm sure you've heard of it. It sucks. I hate it. I hate it probably just as fiercely as those convicts hate each other. I'm an anti-racist agitator disgusted by the present prison predicament. Just imagine seeing thousands of people divided into fascist factions constantly fighting one another. Constantly proving Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' theory every day in a bloody war-zone. It's relentless. So I was greatly relieved one day last summer to hear that the California Department of Corrections was preparing to

obey a mediation agreement from the Supreme Court to desegregate cells. I viewed this as a perfect opportunity for us as convicts -- maybe, just maybe-- to begin breaking some of these foolish barriers.

So in the past several months, I've embarked on an intense anti-racist mission, in which I've met massive resistance. Not only from the imprisoned class, but from these officials as well. The latter see integration as an inherently counter-productive strategy; for, when it is implemented it has the power to unite, thus ruining their divide and conquer plan. The former see it as a threat to their pride, their safety, and their supposed supremacy.

The resistance is comprehensive, but still altogether illogical. It keeps people enslaved and oppressed, hateful and bitter. I believe that the racist resistance on behalf of these fascist officials and oppressed inmates, therefore, needs to be met with anti-racist direct confrontation, agitation, and education in order for it to extinguish and conceivably become extinct.

For starters, I've found confrontation to be an essential component for the simple fact that if I don't outwardly oppose racism, how am I supposed to fight it? I can't. I have to face it and question it. At times this has proved to be risky, if not downright dangerous. Whatever the case, I still face the challenge. For example, I've recently joined forces with a group of soldiers with similar aims. Known as Modesto Anarcho, they've become one with me in this struggle.

About two months ago, I got the green light from them to go forward with plans to post a flyer promoting their 'distro' right here in the combat zone. Excited, I drew it up and then posted it in our dayroom on our bulletin board. I then waited and watched. Within hours, as I stood behind my cell door, half believing my eyes half-denying them, I witnessed an individual - not a cop, but an inmate, dismantling the flyer! I quickly responded to this outrageous violation by calling the said individual to my door so that I could ask him just exactly who the hell he thought he was. As he approached my door, flyer in hand, I recognized him as the building clerk. Upon arrival, I questioned his intentions. I demanded an answer in which he responded by saying that the flyer was "garbage." "Why is it garbage," my celly yelled, "because you don't agree with it?"

I began to explain to him that the flyer was posted on 'our' bulletin board and not 'his.' That I had a right to post any goddamn thing I wanted to post as long as it didn't infringe on anybody else's right to post. All said and done, he then reacted by handing me back the flyer before walking away speechless. Minutes later

my direct confrontation obviously took hold because he returned requesting the flyer. He went back, surprisingly, and posted it back up like a good boy.

On the flipside, my approach in administering direct confrontation to these officials has come to be expressed in the most blatant of ways: cell me up with another race, period! The brass have recently started interviewing inmates, as they did me, as part of the integration process. Here they ask whether the inmate would be willing to cell up with someone of another race. In my interview, I was not only willing but wanted to. And let me be clear by saying that I cannot urge the imprisoned class enough to volunteer as well. The SHU awaits you if you don't. That equates to more time; more oppression; more playing into their hands. Besides, I confronted and spoke to a cop about this issue recently and this is what he had to say: "[T]he more integration there is, the more power [inmates] will have. The less we'll be able to pit y'all against each other, the less we'll be able to control." They're not looking forward to integration and that's precisely why we should be.

As my second strategy, I've chosen to agitate for a less violent and hateful environment. It's challenging, as I'm sure you can imagine, because I'm surrounded by racist resistance on all sides. The imprisoned class consists of various sets and gangs. These include but are not limited to, Neo-Nazi skinheads, Nortenos and Surenos (among the Mexicanos), Bloods and Crips, et al who all believe to some degree in racial division.

However, hate groups are not limited to just prison. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, there are 888 hate groups operating currently in this country. In the State of California 21 skinhead groups have been identified. Out of these 21 groups the majority of members are currently behind bars. On several occasions I have been targeted and invited to prospect for these horribly ignorant and distraught individuals. They tried to agitate, manipulate, provoke and lure me and other young recruits into their ranks. For me, though, I always knew that my whiteness wasn't something to exalt or exploit, especially if it meant oppressing and hating others in the process. So instead of joining them, I took their strategy of agitating and began using it to my advantage.

Now, I run around talking excitedly and earnestly about anti-racist principles. When I find myself in a group of other whites and racist speech takes center stage I attempt to stir up the conversation by offering alternatives to racism, like harmony. I ask things like, "Why don't we go over there and play ball with them blacks?" Or, "Let's go over and offer those Nortenos a cup of joe and see if they want to play a game of chess." To date, I've gotten written up for mutual combat six times over it. It's no puzzle that my ideals are highly controversial, if not downright 'treasonous' in the eyes of many.

I've noticed though, that by just putting myself on the line for the sake of instilling different perspectives and inspiring public discussion, I've definitely ignited a spark. There have been several people thus far that have abandoned their resistance, if just for a second, in order to listen and sometimes embrace what

I have to say. In cases like this, where my agitation takes hold, I pounce on the opportunity to offer zines and other literature to the homies who just might stray away from the racist trap.

Which brings me to my third and final strategy of education. I've found this to be one of, if not the most potent weapon to use when attempting to combat racist resistance. Let me begin by saying that there are many insurrectionary distros out there who have played such a pivotal role in contributing to my mission and also in helping me to analyze the world in which we live. Without them I truly believe I'd still be stuck in an ignorant rut. For instance, I used to feel horrible and ever so guilty about being prison. The state dubbed me a violent felon; a dangerous desperado; a piece of shit junkie. I knew these things weren't true, but still I did not have the knowledge to articulate myself or my actions for what they really were. It wasn't until I started creating contacts with collectives like So. Chicago, Shoelaceton ABC, and Modesto Anarcho that it dawned on me, "wait, my actions and ideals are actually collectively congruent and a part of something much bigger."

As a result, I stopped judging myself by society's standards. I woke the fuck up and started to critique and understand my incarceration, my role in society, and most importantly myself. I found out that these collectives all run a free literature program for prisoners. Which means that convicts are able to educate themselves with 'zines and other literature that promote things like freedom, mutual aid, collective cooperation, autonomy, and of course anti-racist ideals. I believe that we owe it to ourselves to seek out the truth. And once we find ourselves on the path of truth, we owe it to everyone around us to spread the knowledge, collectively, that we have learned. I myself with the aid of the MAC* have been able to effectively and successfully distribute anti-racist literature into the hands of the most needy. The ones that are about to join that skinhead clique, or Mexican set. The ones who are fed up with existing inside the confining walls of their resistance. The ones who are wanting to break the barriers not for a whiter and brighter world but for a more harmonious one. One without divisions and disunity. Enslavement and fear.

In closing, this mission is no easy feat. The odds are stacked against me. The direct confrontation calls for constant conflict. Agitation entails intense conversations that, more times than not, end in consequential combat. Education in the form of 'zines and other literature that literally opposes everything prison thrives on is dangerous to distribute. But that's okay; for, I know that my only safety is in danger.

Send literature and letters to: Brennan MacLean #V83025 D5-221, PO Box 5007, Calipatria, CA 92233
<http://geocities.com/anarcho209>, PO Box 3027 Modesto

Black Struggle at Central State University, Ohio

May you and those close to you in the struggle be very well in all respects. I am blessed to be yet alive and doing my part to wage war against the enemies of a sane humane and non-sociopathic human family, especially in the United States. Those whom we stand and act against are in flagrant and unapologetic violation of the guarantees of the U.S. Constitution and are clearly therefore, certified domestic terrorists, as well as traitors to the people such as those who, for example, have mobilized against all racists and ethnic bigots, with or without badges, black robes, etc..

I've been rereading, volume 21, number three, June 2008. It was very informative, even though the continuing madness is disturbing. But I recognize that just as that madness had a beginning, then it also has an end that can be achieved, insha'llah. Your article was very insightful and well written.

I need your relevant support of a cause that deserves not to be forgotten, just as what occurred at Kent State is not forgotten. I am talking about a form of remembrance for all of those courageous students out of Central State University, the student black power organization - Unity for Unity - that found ourselves under armed attack by both the Ohio State troopers, and then the Ohio National Guard. This was an all campus, life-and-death attack upon an all-black State University that boasted. Excellent academic credentials in the face of conspiracies to close the University, destroy its majority black student enrollment, and merge it with Cedarville College. This happened in 1969, I believe.

After the blatant attack, it was discovered that US covert intelligence agencies had operatives and agent provocateurs on campus as students and some as staff members. The University was surrounded by armed forces with M-16s at the ready, aimed at the faces of unarmed male and female students, who, after being shot at repeatedly, rounded up after physically defeating the right club tear-gas spraying State troopers, predominantly white.

Central State was closed down and students escorted off the campus by FBI agents, who came onto campus to cover up the many students seriously injured or killed in the vicious attack upon the unarmed innocent students of not only Central State University, but also church side or Wilberforce University, that is adjacent Central State. Also, the FBI went

in with cameras, searching each and every campus room for any evidence of black power slogans, while the hierarchy of Unity for Unity faced pending federal charges. SNCC came to legally represent the many students arrested. Even though other black universities were attacked by state and government forces, I believe that what occurred at Central State University was the most blatant and was really covered up. It needs to be brought out into the open, and the courageous students who risked their lives to defend the lives of others should be recognized. I am thinking that those students can be located on the Internet, and eventually brought together after so many years have passed in silence with the truth buried.

Please ponder over the proposed reunion of the survivors of that racist attack upon the peaceful sanctity of Central State University, which too many in the US know nothing about. It should be an example of what we should never allow to happen again. And the murders that occurred should be investigated after being covered up along.

In conclusion, when students were finally allowed to return to the campus, new students with new drugs that had never been there before were all over the campus at very low prices (i.e. heroin, Angel dust, acid, etc.). You know the pattern.

I can only hope I can survive long enough to get out, long enough to once again see my old comrades in arms from Central State University survivors of the late 60s. You would have had to be there to believe how totally unprepared, unorganized students responded to the threat of armed and overwhelming forces (Ohio state troopers) for hours of impromptu hand-to-hand combat, eventually routing the troopers. This led to the inserting of the National Guard, who came in shooting at us without any questions asked, shooting at anything Black that moved.

In April 2008, I was put in the hole for helping other prisoners with legal work. The officials stole all of my legal, religious, and personal property in April, and never returned it when I left for Lexington from the hole in late June. Be well, and keep me on your contact list. Even as you assist me, I passed that assistance on to others.

**Jeffrey Rasheed Hill, #40971133 FDC Miami. Pre-Trial D
P.O. Box 019120, Miami Florida 33101-9120**

Writing Through the Walls: PRISONER LETTERS TO TURNING THE TIDE

To Whom It May Concern:

I hope you are doing okay as this missive arrives. I've had the privilege to read a few issues of your newspaper. I am indigent, but would appreciate receiving my own copy. I am enclosing some essays that I hope you will use in the future.

I also remember reading about prisoners wanting penpal sites. There is one I am involved with called: ForumforUnderstandingPrisons.com. The lady who runs it is named Peggy Swan. You can also write a pen pal ad to her at PO Box 285, Richland Center WI 53581. There is no limit on length. I also have my won case on the site:
<http://freemarvinwilson.blogspot.com>.

I am innocent and hopefully you can pass the word around for help. I wish you the best in the struggle!

I am Adam Due aka Marvin D Wilson, GBCI #297343,
PO Box 19033, Green Bay WI 54307

Dear Editor:

I am a subscriber to your newspaper. I want to give a little insight as to what is going on in the Northern California prison. I am being refused my civil rights, after having been granted and approved a civil action and claim for holding the past my parole date by almost 5 years now. I was placed in solitary illegal confinement after I was attacked by Corrections Officers at Folsom State Prison on August 21, 2004. I was sent to court, with no attorney and set up for an assault on me while I was defending myself in court. I was proven innocent, acting as a pro-se attorney, while I was and still am under shock therapy by Dr. Hitchcock at Atascadero. I need your help. They refuse to parole me. I am past parole since June 2004.

Sincerely,
Rodney Deshone Fodd a.k.a. Mark Page #J-65357,
PO Box 1050, Soledad CA 93960-1050.

Dear *Turning the Tide*,

This letter is a plea for any help you to be able to offer. I am a PA lifer down for 27 plus years for murder are truly did not commit. I recently had a webpage put together, and I'm trying to generate publicity for my page as well as for my case. I fought for over 14 years to acquire DNA testing of evidence used to obtain a conviction. Once I receive even a partial of the DNA testing are requested, the results gave me a 100% exoneration. As the same DA is still in office – he's now the top DA – he's fighting me tooth and nail in my quest to prove my innocence. I have tried about 20 different innocence projects, colleges and law schools, but they all seem to fear PA courts. They have some of the most corrupt courts in the USA. The famous Barry Scheck looked in my case in 1995-96, only to tell me it didn't involve DNA. But of course it didn't, this was a 1982 case. It took me a few more years, but I finally managed to get it. Now the courts are trying to claim I am time barred, without regard to the question of my innocence of the crime.

So as my hair gets grayer, my body gets older, my family is dying off. I'm not begging for any help your organization may be able to offer. I don't know much about the Internet, but my sister has a friend who has put together a page for me on My Space. If there is anything your organization may be able to do for me-Emily and I would truly be indebted to you. If you need any more info please feel free to write me.

Your paper has really opened my eyes to a lot of the crazy antics of the legal system in the US, some of which I find myself caught up in. In advance, I think you've released giving me your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Michael White Wolf Dean #AS 1919,
175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

Editor replies:

We are printing these letters in the hopes that someone may be of assistance to Messrs. Wilson, Fodd or Dean. *Turning the Tide* is a small project carried out by less than a handful of people. The extent of the service we can provide to prisoners is the continuing publication of the newspaper itself, and the development of the analyses and propaganda it contains.

We are not in a position to provide legal services, books, legal referrals, websites, or other resources. We are, quite honestly, taxed to the limit simply to produce and mail the paper every two months. Postal costs, printing costs and other demands on our limited time continue to increase. In the circumstances, we apologize to any prisoner readers who feel slighted by a lack of personal attention or by our inability to provide more extensive services.

Perhaps in the future, if the anti-colonialist, anti-statist perspective behind *Turning the Tide* gains more adherents, we would be in a position to help meet the enormous need to combat the massive injustices suffered by those incarcerated in ever-increasing numbers in the United States.

Any volunteers interested in helping to respond on a more personal basis, or with concrete legal or material resources, to the steady flow of correspondence that *Turning the Tide* receives on a weekly basis, are more than welcome to write us. Write to ARA-LA, P.O. Box 1055, Culver City, CA 90232, e-mail us at antiracistaction_la@yahoo.com, or call us at 310-495-0299. There are literally hundreds of prisoners who would appreciate any response you could give them. Here are some more letters:

Dear ARA,

I just transferred to this prison. Please forward me copies of your new paper at the address above. Thank you!

PS I have been incarcerated since 1988, 20 years. And four years ago, I learned how to read. Since I learned how to read I have fallen in love with Black history. It has helped to open my eyes. I want to thank you, because your newspaper has played a major role in my eye opening experience as well. I understand why the inner cities are flooded with drugs and guns. Now I understand his motives and its intent, as well as its aim.

Please keep up the good work. It opened my eyes, maybe it will open another's. I will do my part inside of here.

Love you, sincerely, absolutely, --Kevin.

Greetings,

I'm writing to ask you please cancel my subscription to *Turning the Tide*. Please remove me from your mailing list. I've been moved to a new unit where receiving your publication is bringing me too much negative attention from guards and prisoners. So, please cancel my subscription and remove me from your mailing list at this time. Thank you. – James

Dear ARA,

You're not going to believe this! It's happening to me and I can hardly believe it. A little over a month ago, I wrote to you requesting *Turning the Tide* and any other information about your organization that you can send me. O.K. So, when you sent the information to me, the prison mailroom stopped the package and sent me a rejection form. Now get this. The stated reason for rejecting this mail was the part of the prison male policy restricting prisoners from receiving racist or racially inflammatory materials. The absurdity of their faulty reasoning prompted me to request an administrative hearing on the matter. Within days of my request, they were telling me to "pack up." I was transferred to one of the worst rat holes in the Siberia of the Michigan gulag. After several weeks of runaround, I finally got fed up and filed a grievance on the whole sordid affair. Now it's a matter of waiting for resolution or retaliation. Wish me luck. Sincerely, Kenneth.

Dear ARA,

Thank you for sending the June 2008 issue of *Turning the Tide*. It was very informative. I am sending my correct mailing address, because the authorities have moved me. Keep up the good work out there and I'll try to keep it real in here. Racism is something that has always pissed me off! Even more so now, being white in prison, every day I am faced with racial conflict. Prisons breed racial conflict, segregation, and bring capitalists' dreams a little closer to reality. Fuck racism! Fuck the system!

In solidarity, A.D.C. 82

What it do, *Turning the Tide*-

This very political prisoner can only afford to pray to Yahweh (goddess of love) that she continue to keep your family in her most tender loving, and keep her hands on all of your brothers and sisters. You dig? Of course you do. I've been M.I.A. off of Mother Earth since 1986. Now I'm in the bowels of the wickedest beast known to man. I did get a copy of your paper for the very first time. And I loved what I saw and read. Would it be possible to get on your mailing list as fast as humanly possible (AFAHP)? Shout that I need that!

In revolutionary love, Timothy 1 Luv, 2 Black, 2 Strong!

Greetings,

I'm writing to ask if I could please be added to your mailing list for your anti-racist newsletter. If so, thank you.

P.S. These western PA Reagan Democrats are vicious to the 5th power. They take racism to anew level! This prison sits about 20 minutes from West Virginia and the way they act, you would think this was Mississippi or Alabama in the 1950s. When they get Blacks or Hispanic brothers and sisters inside of these prisons, they treat us like dirt. Things are real bad here in PA. They have 27 prisons up and running now, with three more being built! Thirty state prisons – this is crazy! I'm mad. I'm locked down 23 hours a day Monday to Friday and 24 on Saturday and Sunday, and I needed to vent! Thank you for hearing me out! – Barry

Editor comments:

This is a sampling of dozens of letters we get from prisoners every month. *Turning the Tide* now goes free to over 1200 prisoners around the U.S. Increasingly, prisons are finding excuses to deny prisoners the right to receive the paper, rejecting it on the basis of "racism" when it clearly and expressly anti-racist. That's because really, the prisons use and foment racism to divide and control the prisoners, and carry out a colonial mission of mass incarceration of nationally-oppressed people, such as Africans (Blacks), Mexicano and indigenous people, and Asians. In addition, because of the huge growth in imprisonment, even though Europeans are a small minority of prisoners, there are more so-called "white" people in prison today than there were prisoners of all ethnicities two decades ago. Luckily, a growing anti-racist consciousness is taking root among prisoners, led by conscious liberationists, but it is in constant struggle against the racial, class and national oppression propagated by the institution within which they are confined.

Another Definition of a Soldier

By: S. K. S. Tabansi a.k.a. Alfonso P. Pew, #BT-7263, Box A, Bellefonte PA, 16823-0820

We the generation born in the 60s and 70s find ourselves at a crucial crossroads of defining our own reality. But we are the immediate results of wars waged between the black liberation movement and the fascist snake apparatus, we have yet to adapt the ideological continuity of the black power movement as a whole.

As we are often referred to as a Hip-Hop generation, we continue to abandon the revolutionary role that music and culture can facilitate as an institution for nation building beyond business. Primarily, the youth are being influenced by surrogates masquerading as "soldiers." One of the most general descriptions in the video entertainment business and popular media is effeminate males so called thug images, projecting commercial roles that are inconsistent with our realities as a people.

We as a people seeking independent nationhood, require real soldiers. A productive picture of a soldier for the self-determination of the people. What we have thus far are sabotaging elements in our struggle. That is, individuals utilizing the thug title without the slightest idea of its origins in warfare, preferably the art of strangulation. The English word *thug* came into usage in modern times, stemming back to India in a cult known as the Thugee. The Thugee flourished under the British Empire rule and the colonization of India. The Thugee can be designated as an outlaw band of professional assassins in rebellion against the state.

By this definition, we can see that the direction of rap's so-called thugs, and personalities such as Soldier Boy, has nothing to do with war, which is the real business of a real soldier. Those of us now in our 30s and 40s need to revitalize the black power movement among the youth. We must no longer allow the infiltration of noncombatants into our homes and lives.

We must convey the stories of soldiers such as Kuwasi Balagoon, and others like Assata Shakur and Safiya Bukhari. The brothers and sisters mentioned here, to name a few are the types of soldiers not aired in the news or in the educational curriculum of the enemy.

These are the types of soldiers that not only liberated themselves but helped liberate others. Without a revolutionary dialogue on the ideological makeup of soldiers, there can be no progress in us liberating ourselves. When it comes to the subjects of independence, autonomy, self rule, anarchy, class, race, imperialism and more, we need a correct perspective on who and what is a soldier, as well as is not.

This is a 21st-century crisis we must redefine and rebuild on. The black entertainment television, national publications, newspapers and magazines are threats to our security as an oppressed nation seeking to liberate ourselves.

Instead, it would inspire revolutionary morale to have youth cadre begin reading the well recommended book *Kuwasi Balagoon: A Soldier's Story: Writings by a New Afrikan Anarchist*. Published by Kersplebedeb.

Pan African Association of America, 2325 Laconia Street, San Diego, CA 92114
www.paaonline.org

The Mosaic, 4722 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143
www.the_mosaic@Verizon.net

Three Essays on the 'N' Word

I have studied the word "nigger" extensively, and found that slaveholders denominated African people as such to suggest that they were scum, worse than pigs being slaughtered, worse than the outhouses they relieve themselves in. The slaveholders called us niggers because a nigger was somewhat less than human – an ape, a porch monkey, a coon, a person who deserved to be raped, murdered, mutilated, neglected, or subject to a long list of other atrocities.

To the African man and woman, "nigger" meant being the white man's property, being raped indiscriminately, mutilated for pleasure, murdered at random, demonized freedom. To paraphrase what brother Born Allah wrote in his piece "Sanctioned by Statute," about the words negro and necro, the British and Americans, through their enslavement and dehumanization process reduced the Alkebulan or African mindset, culture, religion, and way of life to nothingness. We were violently dissuaded from maintaining our ways of transmitting religious and cultural knowledge to future generations. In this fashion, even those who refuse Christianity and other Eurocentric Western ideologies, lost our culture, belief system, identity and way of life.

The [Anglos] believed, when they heard the racist white Spanish slaveholders referred to us as Negro, that they were really saying 'necro,' another Latin word that means dead. A lot of African individuals, like Gabriel Prosser and Nat Turner, refused to be niggers. A nigger does not want to be free. He or she enjoys the confusion, ignorance, mental enslavement and darkness that come with being a nigger. Stop calling yourself nigger. A

nigger is not an African, and an African is not a nigger. I strongly encourage the black man and woman, who describe themselves and our people as niggers, or excuse me, as niggaz, to delete it from their lingo. It's nasty, racist, disrespectful and a slap in the face to all our fore fathers and mothers who rebelled against everything that the word nigger represents: slavery, rape, confusion, and white supremacy.

--Excerpts from "The Psychology of The N Word" by Kamau Zulu Damali a.k.a. Raynell Morgan #279380, P.O. Box 9900, Boscobel WI 53805.

Whites don't go around calling each other cracker, hunky or peckerwood. Chicanos don't call each other wet backs. Those are considered derogatory names of each group. Yet it's an ugly reality that a lot of Black people continue to call each other and be called a 'nigga'. Too many fought, struggled and died to not be called niggers. They didn't want to be known as Mr. Smith's or Mr. Johnson's nigger.

That makes me recall a time in my uninformed stage, in 1991 or 92. I got "Real Nigga" cut into my hair. Looking back, and knowing what I now know, that was "real ignorant." I didn't know who I was or that a "nigga" was something that the white man made the black man into. It is not a term of endearment... I hear brothers speak the word so freely like, "You my nigga." They sound like the old slaveholders. Brothers think that 'nigga' and 'nigger' are two different words with two different meanings. But, the truth is one is just the southern pronunciation of the other and also means property of the white slaveholder. It means a person who

can't have justice, peace, freedom, or true democracy... a person who calls himself a 'nigga' does so because he doesn't know who he really is or what the word really means. We must re-educate ourselves so we can return to our essence. Don't be 'niggas' no more.

-- Excerpts from "I don't want to be a nigga no mo" by Adam Due a.k.a. Marvin Wilson #297343, P.O. Box 19033, Green Bay WI 54307.

Ever since being force-fed the Anglo tongue, we have been in a war of words. In the book "To Be a Slave," that reason is stated: "It's aim was to brainwash the slave, to destroy his mind and replace it with the mind of the master. In that way, the slave who would enslave himself, and there would be no need to police in. A slave should have no sense of himself that was separate from the self the master wanted him to have. Thus it was that no black had a name of his own.

He was given the surname of his owner, no matter how many owners. He might have during his life." (pp. 76-77) He was never asked who he was. He was asked, "Whose nigger are you?" You may look at our ancestors with shame. But you must ask yourself, a deeply personal question, "Who is really the more submissive slave, you or them?" It's one thing to accept or subjugation under the real threat and process of total extermination. But it's another to bow down voluntarily, and say, "Yes, I'm a nigger (or nigga in broken English)."

-- Excerpts from "War of Words." By MKA Ajala a.k.a. Dennis Jones, P.O. Box 9900, Boscobel WI 53805

ANTI-RACIST ACTION NETWORK FOUR POINTS OF UNITY

- 1) WE GO WHERE THEY GO:** Whenever fascists are organizing or active in public, we're there. We don't believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the nazis have the street!
- 2) WE DON'T RELY ON THE COPS OR THE COURTS TO DO OUR WORK FOR US:** This doesn't mean we never go to court. But we must rely on ourselves to protect ourselves and stop the fascists.
- 3) NON-SECTARIAN DEFENSE OF OTHER ANTI-FASCISTS:** In ARA, we have lots of different groups and individuals. We don't agree about everything and we have a right to differ openly. But in this movement an attack on one is an attack on us all. We stand behind each other.
- 4) We support abortion rights and reproductive freedom.** ARA intends to do the hard work necessary to build a broad, strong movement against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and discrimination against the disabled, the oldest, the youngest and the most oppressed people, to end all oppression and exploitation and build a classless society

WE INTEND TO WIN!

ANTI-RACIST ACTION-LOS ANGELES/PEOPLE AGAINST RACIST TERROR
ARA-LA/PART
POBOX 1055*CULVERCITY CA 90232*310-495-0299
antiracistaction_la@yahoo.com
www.antiracistaction.us www.arastore.com www.geocities.com/ara_losangeles
"TURNING THE TIDE" is on-line at www.aratoronto.org

Why “White Power” Makes Whites Powerless

By Comrade Spider, White Panther Organization.

The White Panther Organization takes an emphatic stance against white supremacy and racism. We refute the legacy of white supremacy, and seek to reeducate white brothers and sisters who have been deluded by the concept of “white power.” We believe that for poor whites to be liberated from class oppression and the suffering that comes with poverty, they must support the struggle of non-white peoples who have been historically oppressed by a rich white minority. All so-called “races” are brothers and sisters of the same species known as human, and as long as even one “race” is in bondage, then all are in bondage.

But our anti-racist stance is not merely liberal or moral. We have sound, scientific and historical reasons, and very practical reasons, why we feel that white supremacy must be combated. In short, the whole concept of “white power” and the white supremacist ideology on which it is based, is self-defeating and a contradiction in itself. It fails to empower whites, but instead becomes a psychological trap into which whites blindly fall, and thus become tools for the oppression not only of non-whites, but of themselves also.

There are various levels of white supremacy, each with its own material base, psychological motives, and ideological and physical manifestations. The most far-reaching form of white supremacy is that which served as justification for certain oppressive institutions such as the African slave trade. Economic gain was the primary motive for the slave trade, and white supremacy served as a type of moral justification for the horrible practice. Blacks especially were held as inferior to whites, as a sub-human species with no soul in the Judeo-Christian sense of the term. Therefore, the enslavement of blacks was tantamount to utilization of any other beast of burden such as a cow or mule. Or, if people of color were lucky enough to be considered human, white supremacists played a subtle shift in their doctrine and saw themselves as the bringers of “civilization” and Christianity to the “savage” conveniently non-white races. While they were exploiting the non-whites they claimed they were doing them a favor by saving their souls and civilizing them. Either way, racism, especially of the popular form of white supremacy over non-white peoples, is secondary to the primary contradiction of capitalism. When exploitation of non-whites begins to be put on trial as immoral, the justification presented is the belief that whites are somehow superior to non-whites.

Another ideology that grew out of the desire for economic gain is the concept of “Manifest Destiny.” This phrase was first coined by an editor named John O’Sullivan in 1845 when he, specifically referring to the annexation (read, robbery) of Texas, said that it was “Our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” Many immigrants were pouring into the young settler state, and more land was needed. No problem, there was plenty of land in the West and the “Southwest.” The justification for this land-grab was found in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, which held that God had allotted the land to these white Americans as a divine heritage; and who could argue with God that he had given the land to them?

This concept not only served as a justification for future annexations, but it gave a divine sanction to the prior legacy of white people’s domination over non-white people and their land. Eventually the concept, which was first held as a tenet by the Democratic and then the Whig and later Republican Parties, was the basis for the annexation of Oregon and California and New Mexico, and also the purchase of Alaska and the annexation of Hawaii and the Philippines. Manifest Destiny was a convenient rationale for territorial expansion. While the phrase is no longer used outwardly in modern politics, we find its echo in the modern belief that the US has a divine purpose to spread its “democracy” to the utmost corners of the globe, even if that means unlawful occupation of other nations.

The next prominent step in white supremacist ideology was embodied in the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). After the Civil War ended, the problem of how to readmit the 11 Southern states into the union presented itself. Lincoln was relatively lenient in the conditions of readmission, but the radical Republicans were stricter and passed the Wade-Davis Bill in 1864 to set Reconstruction policy. Lincoln allowed the bill to expire by ‘pocket veto.’ President Johnson sought to continue Lincoln’s lenient policies concerning the South, which restricted the freedom of former slaves and attempted to establish

and assure white supremacy. The Black Code originated in the slave laws and took the form of vagrancy laws targeting unemployed blacks, apprentice laws that made orphans and dependent blacks available for hire to whites, and other economically based and motivated commercial laws designed to ensure white supremacy over the newly freed slaves. As a reaction to the South’s belligerency concerning the treatment of blacks, the union was forced to implement strict legislation known as the Reconstruction Acts.

The period of Reconstruction is when the KKK entered the scene. It was formed in 1866 as a reaction to such measures imposed on the south by the union such as the 14th and 15th amendments, military districts, and other acts that were meant to bring the South in line with northern policies. The KKK explicitly opposed Reconstruction, and sought to maintain white domination over blacks by using terrorist methods to prevent blacks from voting. The Klan saw these new measures imposed by the North as a threat to white sovereignty in the South, and they were not going to sit idly by and watch this supremacy be taken away from them. They dissolved in the 1870s, after Reconstruction was defeated. The KKK reappeared in Georgia in 1915 as a reaction to the increasing immigrant population, and fear of the Russian Revolution. After a period of decline, it resurfaced again in the 1950s and 60s to combat the civil rights movement, always using its method of fear-inducing violence to maintain white domination.

The forms of white supremacy that we who are in prison witness the most are the Aryan and/or neo-Nazi types. There are many of these types of groups in prison in white neighborhoods. The most well-known is probably the Aryan Brotherhood, and others are the Aryan Nations, the White Aryan Resistance, and other racist bonehead gangs. All of them in some form or another claim the Aryan ideology known from Hitler as their guiding ideology.

The Aryans were a prehistoric people who settled in northern India and Iran. They were not a race as such, but a group of people speaking Indo-European (especially the Indo-Iranian) languages. In the 1800s, a French social theorist, the Count de Gobineau, wrote the essay *On the Inequality of Human Races*. This work asserted the superiority of the white race over nonwhites, and claimed that the Germanic peoples, dubbed Aryans by the count, were the height of civilization. His claim was that whites were superior, and would remain so as long as they remain free of black and yellow strains. This madness was propagated by the Count’s disciple, a British-born lover of German culture named Houston Chamberlain (d. 1927), and from him, the Aryan concept influenced Hitler and his national socialist (Nazi) movement.

It’s important to realize however, that most of the Aryan-style groups we come in contact with in prison have no real political goals, aims or ambitions. It is also important not to be overly simplistic or generalizing when discussing or dealing with these groups, although they all have some common characteristics, such as a professed belief in white supremacy, the need to “preserve the white races” from mixing with nonwhites, and purported allegiance to the thought of Hitler, expressed in the use of the swastika and S.S. lightning bolts. These groups, particularly the Aryan Brotherhood, sprang up in prison as a reaction to desegregation and the mass incarceration of Blacks. The primary motive for these groups was protection and identification in the face of growing ethnic diversity within prisons, and the appropriation of Nazi ideology served a secondary function as justification for the cliques.

Material conditions gave rise to these various expressions of racism, and the ideology was secondary. Most are organized for protection and/or criminal pursuits such as drug dealing. Some are overtly gang-bangers, ironically, mimicking the Black gangs in their actions, especially in prison. Others supplement their white supremacist ideology with a Christian and biblical identity. The important thing to realize is that these groups usually have protection or criminal pursuits as a motivation, while the racist ideology is secondary. I would go so far as to say that many of the members are not actually racist, yet paid lip service to the ideology to obtain membership and its benefits.

Having painted this very concise picture of some white supremacist trends, I return to my main point that the concept of “white power” doesn’t empower whites in a real sense, and is therefore a faulty ideology. The White

Panther Organization has no problem with the need for whites to empower themselves. But the mantra white power and the Aryan or anti-black sense is founded on ludicrous assumptions and nonscientific premises, motivated by fear another reactionary tendencies. It is perpetuated by a system that oppresses poor whites as indiscriminately as it does Blacks. Poor whites are tricked into believing that people of color are at the root of their problems, while the true perpetrators – the capitalists and monopolist bosses – never bear the brunt of their rage. White workers are deceived into thinking that their low wages, increased job insecurity, and unhealthy working conditions are caused by immigrants or minorities. In the same manner, whites in prison have been tricked into being intimidated by Blacks, instead of resisting the conditions that resulted in their incarceration. The shield meant to protect them protects their true enemy instead. And the white supremacists at the top of the system have no love for the white supremacists at the bottom, those in the slums and prisons.

The Willie Lynch concept no longer applies merely to Blacks. Prisoners are kept divided on the basis of race, color, culture, religion, and other superficial identifications. Who profits from this division? Who is actually being empowered by this? The white supremacy ideology empowers corporate bosses, who profit from our division. The slave-masters exploit whites with the same ferocity as they do Blacks. They are getting richer and richer, while we are getting poorer and poorer.

Huey P. Newton, Minister of Defense for the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, once said. “White power for white people,” in the same breath as “Black Power for Black People.” Even in his time, he knew that poor whites were just as much victims of the capitalist system as Blacks were. He didn’t mean white power in a white supremacist sense, just as he didn’t mean Black power in a Black supremacist sense. He meant all power to the people. Empowerment does not come at the cost of another race, or by any ideology that this one rates above another. True empowerment comes when all races, creeds, colors, and cultures unite to defeat a common enemy: capitalist imperialism.

The system compels corporations to pack up and go to other countries, where wages are ridiculously lower, leaving thousands of whites and nonwhites alike, jobless. This is the enemy of poor whites. The imperialist system that constitutionally sanctions slavery, for white and nonwhite prisoners alike, paying both the same slave wages, depriving both of the right to vote, or pressing both by inhumane living conditions – that is the enemy of poor whites. But poor whites cannot defeat this enemy, and thereby improve our own conditions. By blaming nonwhites, or by believing in some perceived white supremacist ideology. Those things only empower the enemy. For poor whites to truly empower ourselves, we must reject these unscientific, outdated and superstitious ideas of white supremacy and join forces with Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Arabs, and all other oppressed people everywhere. As long as whites continued to scream white power in the Aryan sense of the phrase, they are actually forfeiting their own power to the corporate bosses, and falling into the trap that was not for them. White supremacy is making whites powerless, especially in the prison system, where it is found in a concentrated form. This ideology does not give poor whites a better life, but instead keeps us from the very thing that will truly empower us: uniting with all oppressed nationalities to fight the common enemy and capitalist-imperialist system. The only truly revolutionary power is People Power, the combined power of the masses, regardless of race, nationality, creed, religion or color. White people, join the White Panther Organization today! Unite with the Black Panthers, and all truly revolutionary groups of oppressed peoples! All power to the people!

For more information concerning the White Panther Organization, the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, or the Red Heart Warriors Society, right: P.O. Box 4362, Allentown, PA 18105. The author can be reached for correspondence at: Billy Johnson #322385, P.O. Box 279, Clifton TN 38425, and I can receive mail from other inmates.

Editor’s Note: Although we disagree with a number of aspects of the WPO’s ideology, we admire and respect the work they are doing to confront white supremacy and build solidarity inside the walls, especially as they function in solidarity and under the leadership of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party-Prison Chapter.

**We Cannot Allow any President to Shift Focus to Afghanistan
a Better World Rests on Our Ability to Assent Ourselves as Architects of Our Future**

by Camilo Mejia, Board Chair of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW)

During the final presidential debate at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) requested that moderator Bob Schieffer allow them to ask each candidate a question. The question for Sen. McCain was about veterans' benefits since, being a war veteran and former POW himself, he should have a better voting record when it comes to veterans' well-being. The question for Sen. Obama, who voted against the invasion of Iraq and called the invasion illegal at one point, focused on whether he would be willing to support soldiers who wanted to become conscientious objectors.

Not only was IVAW not able to ask the questions, but we were attacked by the Hempstead mounted police. Ten of our members, along with some civilian activists, were arrested, and two of our members were injured, one suffering a broken cheekbone. Neither candidate mentioned either Iraq or Afghanistan during the entire 90-minute debate.

The promise of a better nation, one whose resources are dedicated to improving social conditions and where wealth is distributed to lift up the working ranks of society, rings hollow when military veterans can't ask a question without being violently repressed. All this is to say that regardless of who gets elected, the work of building a better world remains in the hands of the people and rests on our ability to assert ourselves as the true architects of our future.

Obama is regarded as the antiwar candidate for having voted against the invasion of Iraq and for promising a progressive withdrawal of troops from that country, yet both he and McCain have spoken about the "success" of the troop "surge" in Iraq. But to seriously address the situation in Iraq and the eventual withdrawal from it would require Obama to address the 180,000 private contractors in Iraq, the permanent military bases, and the diplomatic and corporate complex from which the U.S. government intends to run the country. And of course, the "success" of the surge fails to recognize that more than half of the population of Iraq is either displaced, in need of emergency aid or dead.

The "global war on terror," the name given by the past and now future administrations to justify profit-driven invasions and occupations, needs a new centerpiece.

The Iraq war has become too unpopular to continue justifying the U.S. imperial agenda. We cannot allow any president to shift focus to Afghanistan in order to continue American warmongering. President-elect Obama has promised to continue pouring troops into that country and to see the war spill into Pakistan if he deems it necessary.

The antiwar movement has to realize the need to continue the struggle for peace and justice. That struggle starts at home where, in opposing costly and illegal wars of aggression, we wage battles against poverty, racism and exploitation of the working class by the ruling elite. Only by building a true grassroots movement to combat a corporate-controlled government will we be able to create a world where peace, justice and social equality can prevail. This is the work of the people, not of the politicians, regardless of who is president. It has been going on; it continues; it can never stop, not for one minute.

Camilo Mejia was the first active-duty soldier to publicly refuse redeployment to Iraq and is the chair of the board of Iraq Veterans Against the War. Send friends and relatives CI Special, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Call: 917.677.8057 or email <thomasfarton@earthlink.net>. Editor's note: *Turning the Tide* is also free to active duty members of the military. Send name, ID number and APO address to: antiracistaction_la@yahoo.com

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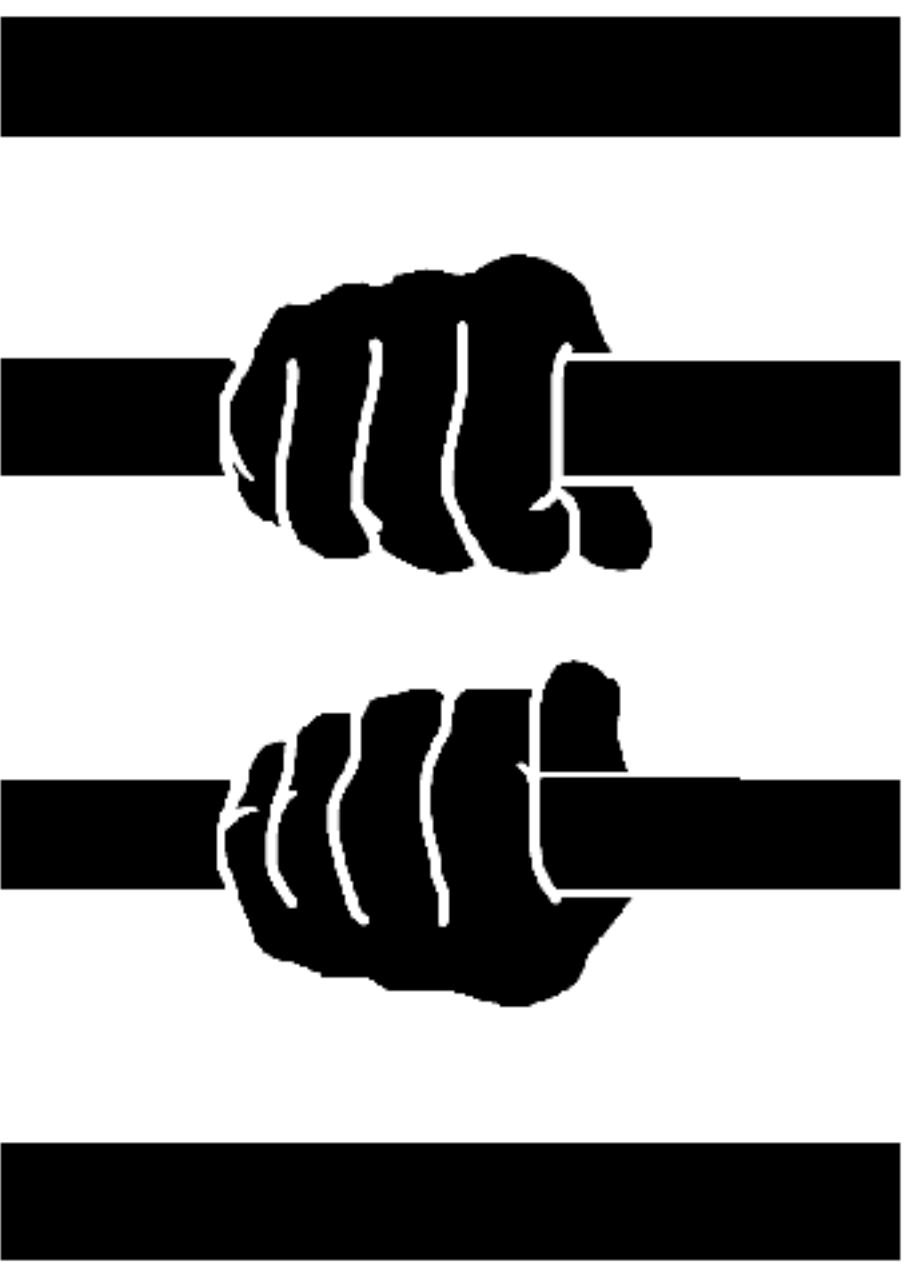
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The Prison Issue



***The degree of humanity in
a society can be judged by
entering its prisons.-Dostoevsky***