

# A Spectre is Haunting Europe

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

The spectre is unfortunately not communism but a resurgent, zombie neo-fascist racial nationalist populism. I visited Sweden, Poland and Germany this summer and became more aware of troubling developments in all three countries, indicative of the growth of far right forces, rooted in old fascist elements in northern and western as well as eastern Europe. You can come and learn more about anti-fascism in Europe from two German antifa visiting L.A. on September 27. Contact ARA-LA for details.

Anti-fascists in Stockholm told me that although their movement was still strong and there was substantial, broad opposition to open Nazis, the racist right had successfully moved away from demonstrative street actions and confrontations and into the electoral arena over several years. Shortly after my visit, the far right Sweden Democrats, with neo-Nazi roots, who have promised to freeze migration and want to take the nation out of the European Union, became the third largest party in the elections, with 17.6% of the vote (up by about 5% from the last election but short of the 20% of the total vote that had been predicted).

Although there was much greater diversity in Sweden, apparently comfortably, than I saw in a visit 8 years ago, the ruling center-left coalition, led by the Social Democrats, had paved the way for the election outcome through over a decade of neo-liberal privatization policies and recent efforts to embrace anti-immigrant sentiment. The Social Democrats came in first, but their coalition, including the Greens and the Left Party, barely led a mainstream center-right coalition, and the outcome of the deadlock is unclear. Jimmie Akesson, leader of the far-right Sweden Democrats (a misnomer) portrayed himself as a kingmaker. “We see that we are this election’s winner, but now we enter a new mandate period and now we are going to get influence over Swedish politics for real.” If the center-right is willing to accept their support to take over the government, Sweden will join the ranks of European countries where neo-nazi-based parties are now part of ruling coalitions.

In Austria (Hitler’s birthplace, and once united with Nazi Germany in the Anschluss) the mainstream right’s junior coalition partner, the Freedom Party once led by a former SS officer, now controls the defense, interior and foreign ministries. The Daily Beast reports that hackers discovered that the party’s chairman, Johann Gudenus, once had the Facebook password “heilheil”.

The neo-nazis have also taken aim at the intelligence services. A police unit headed by a Freedom Party member raided the homes of four staffers and an office of the domestic Austrian intelligence agency known as the BVT (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz und Terrorismus Bekämpfung, i.e., Federal Bureau for the Protection of the Constitution and for Counterterrorism) in May of this year. The bureau had released, supposedly accidentally, an intelligence report on right-wing extremism.

Herbert Kickl, Austria’s Minister of the Interior from the Freedom Party, claimed they were investigating “corruption” in the BVT based on documents that exposed sex parties among staffers. The material, attributed to a BVT employee, was noised around for a year until Kickl took over the interior ministry. Peter Gridling, head of the BVT for the last 10 years, was fired several days after the raids. According to the Daily Beast, he had been the object of a virulent campaign by the website unzensuriert.at (known as “the Austrian Breitbart”). The former editor in chief of unzensuriert.at is now Kickl’s communications director. Gridling has been reinstated, but Germany’s intelligence agency has limited its sharing of information with the Austrians after it turned out that some of their material was seized in the raids.

Austria also hosts the largest regular gathering of neo-Nazis in Europe. On May 12, about 10,000 Croatians – including neo-Nazis and Catholic officials – gathered in a field in the southern Austrian town of Bleiburg to commemorate the defeat of the Ustaše army in May of 1945. The fascist movement which collaborated with the Nazi invasion, was responsible for murdering hundreds of thousands of Jews, Roma, Serbs and Muslims during World War II, many in the organization’s Jasenovac concentration

camp in Croatia. It was the only concentration camp run without any German involvement. Thousands of Ustaše members were captured and killed by Allied forces in Bleiburg. According to VICE, the annual event mourning that fact is organized by the Croatian Catholic Church, which claims that the gathering is not political, but simply a Mass that aims to “remember the dead”.

In Poland, where I visited with anti-fascists at a squat in Warsaw, I learned that the mainstreaming and embrace of open neo-Nazis has also taken place there. Whereas in earlier years, antifa had been able to forestall or disrupt neo-Nazi marches in the capital, beginning in 2015, the Nazi element had become part of a larger, nationalistic march on Nov. 11, Polish National Day (anniversary of the end of World War I when Poland again became independent). That year, several hundred neo-Nazis peeled off from the larger march and physically attacked one of the autonomous movement’s squats in the city; although the squatters and supporters were able to fend off the attack, it was from a clearly defensive position.

In 2017, the 99th anniversary, 60,000 people including right-wingers from across Europe marched in Warsaw, in the “unofficial” celebration, many chanting “Sieg Heil” (Hail Victory, the chant of Hitler’s Nazis) and carrying banners reading “Clean Blood” and “White Europe.” Warsaw was by far the “whitest” and least diverse city I visited in Europe as compared to Gothenburg or Stockholm in Sweden, Frankfurt in Germany, or London. Vessel cancellations forced me to skip a visit to Bialystok, Poland, where my father grew up, but from what I was told, it is now a hot-bed of neo-Nazi activity, with swastika graffiti everywhere, and antifa forced to keep a low profile.

Poland’s ruling Law and Justice Party [PiS] has taken a hard line against immigrants and refugees, and defended the racist and nationalistic Warsaw rally. Jaroslaw Kaczynski is the “power behind the throne” in Poland. With no official government or state position, he remains party leader and is considered the most powerful man in the country. The party has tightened its grip on the security services, the courts and the civil service, and the media, purging and replacing personnel at the public TV channel with party loyalists.

In Slovakia, the People’s Party Our Slovakia (LSNS), led by Marian Kotleba, similarly moved from the fringes to winning seats in parliament. Kotleba used to wear a uniform modeled on the militia of Slovakia’s wartime Nazi puppet state. He rails against the Roma people (AKA “gypsies”, also victims of genocide under Hitler) and is an admirer of Jozef Tiso, the Catholic priest and wartime leader who deported tens of thousands of Jews to Nazi death camps. His People’s Party-Our Slovakia got 23% of first-time voters in the last election, and took 14 seats in the 150-member parliament. Similar to Sweden, the left-wing populist Prime Minister Robert Fico had paved the way, repeatedly vowing to protect Slovakia from an influx of Muslims, saying Slovakia would take in 200 Syrian refugees, but only if they were Christians. By legitimizing



*Eastern European fascists gather with torches and neo-Nazi flags & banners.*

such anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim politics, he made the openly racist far right acceptable, and their electoral success possible.

But as Sweden shows, electoral success for the Nazi-rooted far right is not limited to former Warsaw Pact countries or former Soviet republics like the Ukraine, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The Dutch PVV and Marine Le Pen’s Front National in France are now partnered with the neo-Nazi Austrian FPÖ in the European Parliament. Other allies include the Danish People’s Party (DPP) and Vlaams Belang (VB) in Belgium. Filip Dewinter, who is now the leader of Vlaams Belang, published a 70-point program in 1992 calling for the forcible deportation of all ‘immigrants’ -- up to the third generation born in Belgium -- back to their countries of “ethnic origin” — in practice, this would imply the repatriation of the majority of ethnic-minority Belgians, whether or not they were Belgian citizens. Dewinter opposed efforts to integrate “non-European foreigners” into Flanders and eventually all of Western Europe as a dangerous plot to create “multi-racial utopias.” Russia under Putin has promoted such parties.

According to an article on Medium, Belgian philosopher Etienne Vermeersch, professor emeritus at the University of Ghent, points out that Dewinter founded the NJSV (Nationalist Young Student Association) in 1980, with a flag bearing the traditional Nazi colors—black, white and red. Dewinter’s NJSV published Signal, a magazine which in several issues featured a sword with a ribbon, stating, “My honor is loyalty”, the original slogan of the Nazi SS.

Meanwhile, in Italy, two far-right parties formed the core of a new government earlier this year. The right-populist, anti-establishment Five Star Movement agreed to form a government with the Liga Nord (Northern League) after Silvio Berlusconi’s Forza Italia, which had been part of an electoral coalition led by the League, agreed to support the government in Parliament “from the outside” (without entering into the government itself or getting any cabinet posts). League leader Matteo Salvini took the post of Interior Minister, and in addition to blocking entry to refugees (he refused to let a vessel carrying several hundred migrants rescued at sea to dock in Italy), he has ordered a census of Roma, with the aim of deporting those who are not Italian citizens.

The other noteworthy lesson I learned while in Europe is the similarity of other struggles going on over housing and gentrification/displacement, in Stockholm and Frankfurt, although with less police violence than is the case in Los Angeles. But those cities, and according to reports from British antifa, London among others are seeing poor people and migrants driven out of areas by rising housing costs or new upscale and corporate construction projects. Comrades in Frankfurt were involved in a rent strike and in efforts to build a tenants’ union; they were very interested in developments in Los Angeles along those lines. Fighting fascism, colonialism or gentrification, our struggle is international. Workers and oppressed people of the world, unite! We have a world to win!

## 100X100 Campaign to Increase Publication Frequency of *Turning the Tide*

Over its 30-year publishing history, *TTT* has been published in magazine format, as a 24-page tabloid, and from time to time on a bi-monthly basis, six issues a year. For the last few years, economic necessity has dictated that we commit to four 8-page issues a year. Last year, we put out 6 issues; this year we will publish 5 times. To restore regular bi-monthly publication, we have launched a fund-raising campaign we’ve dubbed “100X100.”

We are looking for one hundred people who will donate \$100 a year, or \$10/mo, to make it possible for *TTT* to resume publishing six issues a year, and continue mailing nearly 2000 copies of each issue into the prisons. You can donate online at <http://gofundme.com/eugzgg>, via Paypal to [antiracistaction\\_la@yahoo.com](mailto:antiracistaction_la@yahoo.com) or by check to Anti-Racist Action.

*Turning the Tide* doesn’t print or mail itself. Some prisoners who get the paper contribute a few stamps; their contribution more often comes by writing articles, letters and poems or sending in drawings. Often, they pass the copy of *TTT* that they received from hand to hand, cell to cell, or they send in the names and addresses of half-a-dozen or more other prisoners. **Prisoners, if you can find donors or subscribers outside prison to subsidize your sub, that would help a lot.**

If you’d like to see *Turning the Tide* more frequently, if you want to contribute to breaking down the walls of isolation and separation imposed by the prison system, please contribute. If you can’t manage \$100 all at once, you could donate \$10 a month. But any donation you make can help.

If you can’t donate yourself, please help spread the campaign via your social media, to your Facebook friends, Twitter followers, and email contacts. Everything helps.

If the campaign is successful, we will begin publishing every other month in 2019. Postage is our biggest expense. Nobody gets paid at *TTT*. But the Postal Service is not so generous. We have a handful of people who are sustainers, making a monthly donation, a larger number of people who subscribe once a year or so. Right now, we are at 10% of our goal. LA supporters could set up house meetings, where the editor will pitch to your friends for support. The future of *Turning the Tide* is in your hands. Now, while you’re thinking about it, go to:

<http://gofundme.com/eugzgg>

and donate. Then share it with your contacts. With your help, *Turning the Tide* can step up to the “urgency of now” -- the necessity for radical organizing, educating and analyzing to respond to the growing crisis of the Empire -- endless war, police terror with impunity, mass incarceration, colonialism, ecological devastation that will shortly become irreversible. If you think *TTT* is a useful tool in the struggle for people’s power and a new world, please donate today. If you wish, you can also just send cash, check or money order to **Anti-Racist Action, PO Box 1055, Culver City CA 90232.**

# Prison-assisted drug overdoses:

## TDCJ is among many state and federal prisons affected by the deadly K2 epidemic

By Jason Renard Walker

In this article, Jason Walker exposes the full deadly cost of the K2 epidemic, and staff complicity in smuggling the drug into prisons. Jason is facing continuing retaliation and harassment for his writing and organizing, please see here for ways that you can put pressure on the prison administration to protect him: <https://itsgoingdown.org/urgent-call-to-action-defend-jason-walker-from-staff-harassment/>

The number of K2-related deaths in Texas prisons is mounting, year after year. Due to this drug being undetectable by prison drug-testing kits, it has become a favorite for prisoners, and prison officials who profit handsomely from smuggling it in.

This has caused other common prison drugs, like cocaine, marijuana and meth, to be discarded by prisoners who now have the ability to get high without worrying about failing drug tests. Prison staff have also adjusted to this epidemic by abandoning random drug testing, only doing so if the testee is “fingered” by another prisoner, or suspected of having a particular drug in his system. This ultimately increases the rate of positive hit results and allows TDCJ to save money by reducing the amount of drug test kits it uses annually.

From my experience, victims of K2 overdose experience heavy sweating, heart attack and panic attack-like symptoms before dropping dead. So it’s highly possible that K2-related deaths are being recorded as heart attacks and heat strokes. A full record for these deaths may not exist.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) listed K2 as synthetic marijuana, which is a misnomer. It’s supposed to trigger the same receptors in the brain as THC – the component in marijuana that produces the high. But unlike THC, the chemical makeup of K2 is unique, and can cause hallucinations, seizures, heart attacks, aggressive behavior, and suicidal acts and behavior.

This is the same drug that made national headlines when, in the span of 24 hours, 70 people overdosed in New Haven, CT. Sarah Blaskey of the *Miami Herald* exposed in her August 21, 2018 story that the Florida Department of Corrections has issues with K2-related deaths. Prisons in Alabama and all over the nation are becoming infested with K2 and its issues.

In prison, K2 often contains traces of rat poison and roach spray, and doesn’t contain a single chemical makeup, so basically it can contain anything. Despite prisoners witnessing their friends die during smoke sessions, they keep getting high. And more often than not, seek the particular K2 strain that killed them. “I gotta get some of that”, some say after learning of an overdose.

Dr. Tegan Boehmer, of the CDC’s National Center for Environmental Health, stated that dozens of chemical are used as synthetic cannabinoids, and their unknown characteristics make them dangerous. “They are very dangerous because there are a lot of unknowns.” The CDC studies also suggest this drug is highly addictive.

Blaskey’s *Miami Herald* report gave a peek into the perils of K2 use in prison. “Last year, at Franklin Correctional Institution, Eugene Martin fell forward suddenly out of bed, dead from K2. At Mayo CI, Hakim Ramatoola had a seizure and died after smoking K2 described by others who participated as ‘the worst ever.’

Jarquez Jones died at Santa Rosa after smoking an unusual-looking black K2. Jamil Wright overdosed at Martin Correctional. Ruben Harris and Calvin Johnson at Holmes Correctional. Jesse Johnson at Okaloosa. All in the last half of 2017. And the list goes on.”

From November 1 2017 thru to April 19, 2018, I was housed at Ramsey Unit in Rosharon, TX; Michael Unit in Tennessee Colony; and Telford Unit in New Boston TX. These transfers were as retaliation for exposing bad conditions. After the circulation of this piece, I expect to be transferred again.

Between these prisons, I’ve gathered many reports about prisoners dropping dead from K2 overdoses. Here at Telford, prisoners say that “Mike” died from a K2 overdose on 4 Building, D-pod, Cell 54 nearly two years ago. Rumors say that his “stick” had been laced with nitroglycerin by a guard who’d given it to him. Marks from the welding on the cell to keep it secure pending the investigation can still be seen. Since I’ve been here, two prisoners have died from overdoses.

In particular, on August 29, 2018, around 2:00 am, I watched a black prisoner convulse, foam and jitter while strapped to a gurney being moved from 4 Building to the infirmary by medical staff who responded with less than the required urgency to collect an overdose victim. This was hours after I saw medical staff slowly pushing a gurney to grab another overdose victim. The two may not have died, but they certainly overdosed. From what I hear, many prisoners have died throughout the years.

During my stay at Ramsey, Nov 3, 2017- Feb 21, 2018, three prisoners died from K2 overdoses – one died the day he was leaving the prison to go home. The number of mild overdoses is astounding. On average, at least one a day visited the infirmary here.

Within the nucleus of this epidemic, the symptoms of K2 and the drug itself have been given names that are common to staff and prisoners. Tune, toochie, two, gas, and dropdead are names given to the drug; tune attack, tuned out, and episode are names given to one whose behavior becomes bizarre, or they “get stuck” and stare into space. Zombie-looking prisoners can be seen slogging around everywhere.

The rolled-up joint itself isn’t traditional-looking at all. Due to K2 having such a powerful impact on the mind and body, small toothpick-size “sticks” are rolled and smoked by up to three people. I’ve seen a person take three puffs then instantly pass out within a minute, stick burning in hand. Guards have a routine of having others place an overdosed prisoner in his cell without calling medical staff, so many overdoses, and their harm to an individual’s brain, are going unreported. One guard, Sergeant Garland, is notorious for her indifference to overdosed prisoners. In one instance, she wrote a disciplinary case on a prisoners for not going to work. She recognized he was too high to function, and commented that she knew, but she failed to seek him medical care.

My first encounter with a “tune attack” occurred in June 2018. A prisoner sitting next to me on the dayroom bench had just taken a few puffs; within three minutes, he began clawing at his chest, all the way down to his ankle. It seemed like he thought his heart had left its original spot and come down his leg.

During my stay at the Clements Unit, a rumor spread in 2017 that a prisoner had a tune attack, screamed “I believe I can fly,” then leaped to his death from the

3rd tier. On Jan 19, 2018 at the Ramsey unit, multiple prisoners told me that Alfred Brosig had just smoked a stick before strangling Kenneth W. Johnson to death and then showing guards what he’d done. This was after excited friends of Johnson spent time trying to wake the sleeping guard up.<sup>3</sup>

Medical staff often joke about how the OD’ed prisoner behaved when they respond to a call. Despite the dangers of this drug, the Telford Unit administration has provided poor oversight on containing the drug, or preventing it from being smuggled in. There is no real interest in implementing a counter, or increasing the amount of scrutiny guards receive when entering the prison. Burnt wicks, partially smoked sticks, and the smell of smoke lingers on the stairwell, in the dayroom, and out in hallway.

Ranking staff see obvious paraphernalia and simply step over it. Evidence of drug use is everywhere, so I believe these officials are turning a blind eye to maintain a dormant environment, even at the cost of self-inflicted death. This is state-sponsored genocide!

What we as prisoners need to realize is that this is a staged epidemic that’s designed to stunt our consciousness, growth, and ability to be productive members of society upon our release. Bringing awareness to this is the right thing to do, it’s sabotaging our culture and killing us off. Guards get rich, we die!

Between 2016-2017, nearly 60,000 grams of K2 were confiscated in Florida prisons. This doesn’t include the amount that was smoked or sold. TDCJ has the biggest prison system in the US, so there’s no telling how much has been smuggled in here.

In the January 2018 issue of the San Francisco Bayview, Comrade Shaka Shakur hit the nail on the head in his piece, “They say the police said I was a snitch, but what does that make you?” when he explored the perils of lumpen cats hanging with and gossiping with the guards, but claiming exposure of the guards violating our rights is snitching.<sup>4</sup>

Being in cahoots with guards to push K2 among the masses is no different than a police informant selling drugs in the hood that he got from the FBI to help them frame a drug ring. If someone happened to threaten that guard’s job at the prison, wouldn’t you conspire to have that cat shipped off, killed, or given trumped-up felony charges? If exposing guards using K2 to kill us is snitching, what does that make you?

**Dare to struggle, dare to win! All power to the people!**

**Jason Renard Walker #1532092**

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1 Susan Scutti, *What is K2?*: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/08/18/health/k2-synthetic-weed-explainer/index.html>

2 Sarah Blaskey, *This drug is turning Florida inmates into ‘zombies.’ It’s fueling a record death toll*: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/special-reports/florida-prisons/article215642855.html>

3 Jason Walker, *Murder at the Ramsey Unit, Texas*: <https://itsgoingdown.org/murder-ramsey-unit-texas-prison-administrations-repression-whistle-blowers>

4 Shaka Shakur, *They say the police said I was a snitch, but what does that make you?*: <http://sfbayview.com/2017/12/they-say-the-police-said-i-was-a-snitch-but-what-does-that-make-you/>

## Oklahoma Police Chief Exposed as Blood & Honour Nazi Video and Music Distributor

Bart Alsbrook, an Oklahoma police chief who resigned from the force after his neo-Nazi efforts were exposed, got a new job with the neighboring Achille OK police force. Achille’s Chief Chris Watson said he was fully aware of Bart Alsbrook’s past, and still chose to hire him as a reserve officer in the department.

“Everyone has a past, some of which they may not be proud of, of which he is not. He wishes he never had those connections,” Watson told KXII TV.

In Aug. 2017, Alsbrook had been hired as interim chief of the Colbert OK PD, just 10 days after the “Unite the Right” in Charlottesville. The deadly white supremacist rally prompted the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to create a Hate Map tracking all known hate groups operating in the US. One group identified by the map was ISD Records, a website and record label selling music



from neo-Nazi punk bands, as well as far-right and confederate memorabilia. It appeared to be owned and operated by Alsbrook.

Its website banner also claimed it was the voice of Blood & Honor USA, a bonehead hate group associated with British neo-Nazis. It was described by the SPLC as being controlled by two boneheads “who run a racist music label in Ohio and a racist video company in Texas.”

The racist Texas company was NS88 Videos, run by Blood & Honour USA’s Texas coordinator Alsbrook. The company name used Nazi code, with NS referring to “national socialism” and 88 meaning “Heil Hitler” as H is the eighth letter of the alphabet. These disclosures forced Alsbrook to resign as interim chief in Colbert, but apparently were not sufficient to keep him from being hired in nearby Achille.

(Based on reports in Newsweek)

# The National Prisoner Strike is Over.

Now is the time that prisoner strikers are most in danger and need solidarity more than ever.

by Heather Ann Thompson

<https://theconversation.com/the-national-prisoner-strike-is-over-now-is-the-time-prisoners-are-most-in-danger-102471>

Over the last few weeks men and women across the US – and as far away as Nova Scotia, Canada – have protested to demand humane treatment for the incarcerated.

In 2016, when prisoners engaged in similar hunger strikes, sit-ins, and work stoppages, their actions barely registered with the national media. As someone who regularly writes about the history of prisoner protests and prison conditions today, this lack of interest was striking.

This time around, though, prisoner demands to improve the conditions of confinement have captured the attention of reporters everywhere. Coverage can be found in such major newspapers as the Washington Post and the New York Times. Popular magazines such as GQ and Teen Vogue have also published pieces. All seem to sense that US prisons may well be descending into crisis, so perhaps it is time to start paying attention.

That our institutions of confinement are in a state of emergency is, in fact, not new. Prisoners tried to tell us this when they erupted in 2016. It was perhaps still possible to imagine that the abuses they suffered might be addressed by a seemingly robust bipartisan criminal justice reform effort in D.C.

Today, however, with Donald Trump in the White House and Jeff Sessions heading the DOJ, it's harder to conjure up such optimism. News of seven horrific prisoner deaths at Lee Correctional Facility in South Carolina last April made it quite clear that corrections officials are still failing to ensure prisoner safety and haven't made the conditions inside their institutions any less brutal. This time, with politicians so noticeably less vocal about this vital issue, prisoners alone are calling the public to action.

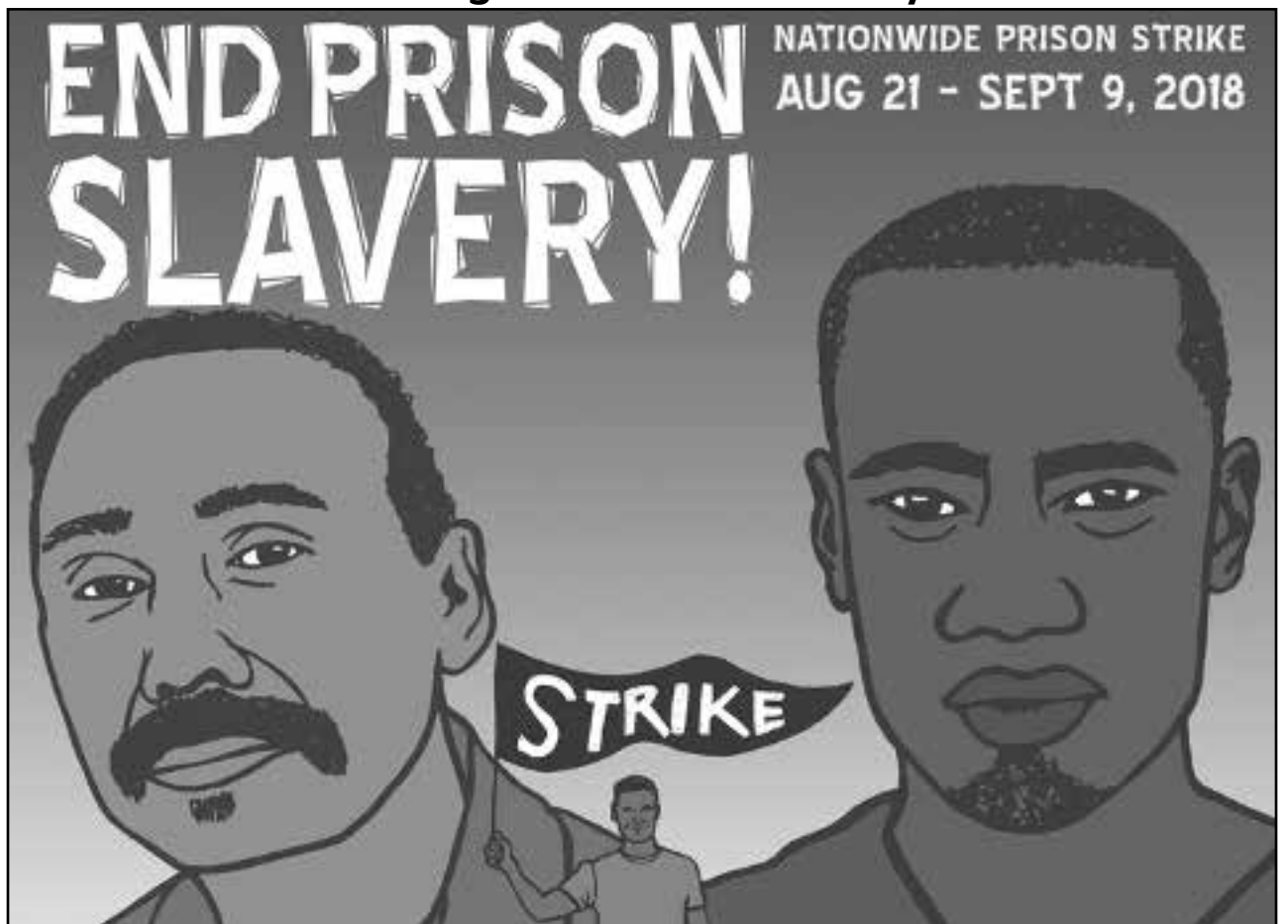
That their determination to be heard is finally striking a chord, is good news for our nation.

## Our responsibility

Prisons and detention centers exist and claim to operate in the name of the public good. People want to believe these institutions make our society safer by upholding the rule of law.

Yet, as those locked up keep telling us in painful graphic detail, these places are barbaric. They do far more harm than good. These are places where men, women and children are placed in solitary confinement for periods considered torture by medical experts; where human beings are fed too little, denied access to basic medical care, and are raped, abused and even killed.

Children behind bars are increasingly isolated from their parents, and parents behind bars find it



almost impossible to connect with their kids, thanks to companies who charge usurious rates for calls, and push states to allow only “video visitations.” These myriad abuses take place in taxpayer-funded institutions, and can happen because the public is utterly shut out.

So, it's indeed positive that the media is finally shining light on what prisoners need in order to survive their time. They need “immediate improvements to conditions, and prison policies that recognize the humanity of imprisoned men and women,” an end to prison slavery as well as real rehabilitation programs.

Prisoners want to end to severe racial discrimination evident in our nation's policing practices, laws and sentencing guidelines. They are calling for the rescinding of 1996's Prison Litigation Reform Act, which has made it difficult for prisoners to seek legal help.

But what happens next is also critical. It is when the headlines fade, and prisons once again slip from the public's consciousness that prisoners are in the most jeopardy.

Consider the brutal aftermath of the Attica Prison Uprising in 1971, when nearly 1,300 men took over that facility in upstate NY to call attention to the inhumane conditions inside. As the state moved in to retake the facility, state troopers shot 128 men and killed 39 –

prisoners and hostages alike. Countless other men were then tortured.

Consider the reprisals experienced by prisoners in Michigan's Kinross prison in 2016 or what the men in South Carolina's Lee Correctional are enduring even now – lockdowns 24/7 in 6x8 cells, insufficient food, and lack of basic and desperately needed medical care.

Men and women behind bars are in most in danger in the days, weeks and months after they have dared to protest.

It's the responsibility of anyone who has voted for prison construction to know what happens in those institutions, particularly since this country has locked up more people in the last 40 years than ever before in its history – more than any other country. We must pay attention to which companies benefit from such a harsh criminal justice system, and recognize the devastating price certain communities have paid for that same system to exist. Because it ensnares so many of our most vulnerable citizens, we must insist that those inside be treated lawfully and humanely.

*Heather Ann Thompson has received grant funding from the Art for Justice fund, and the Open Society, and has consulted with the Prison Policy Initiative. She is a Professor of History and Afro-American and African Studies at the University of Michigan.*

## NO to U.S. Prison Imperialism!

### Solidarity with the Striking Prisoners of Colombia and North America

CALL TO ACTION - Add your name to the People's Human Rights Observatory's declaration in support of prisoners' demands for better conditions and dignified treatment in Colombia, Canada, and the United States.

We, the People's Human Rights Observatory (Observatorio de los Derechos Humanos), declare our solidarity with the worldwide resistance to prison imperialism and reject the expansion of the US model of mass incarceration. Likewise, we express our support for the demands of the prisoners of La Tramacúa Penitentiary in Valledupar, Colombia, and of the prisoners of various North American penitentiaries, and their desires for dignified lives.

The prisoners of La Tramacúa waged a hunger strike for more than a month, beginning on July 11, 2018. Their demands included calls for access to water, ventilation, and medical attention. People interned in jails of the US and Canada have been in the largest prison strike in the history of the region since August 21, 2018: strikes in 17 U.S. states and some Canadian jails. The demands of the North American prisoners are similar to those of the La Tramacúa strikers, for medical attention and against the excessive number of deaths due to lack of medical care and penal system abuses. Especially, the North American strikers denounce the racism of the penal and justice system that has found new ways to convert jails into centers of slavery.

The strikes have had significance internationally. The US has the largest population of the incarcerated – 2.3 million prisoners – and the highest rate in the world of

its population in jails. Meanwhile, while non-Hispanic white people constitute 63.7% of the U.S. population, persons of African and Latino origins represent almost 2/3 of the prisoners in the US. People who lack a GED or high school diploma represent 47% of the incarcerated. With less than 5% of the world population, the US has 25% of the world prison population. Apparently, the government considers this a good situation. Today, the US is exporting its models of mass incarceration to the world and has involved itself in the prison systems of at least 34 countries. In some of these countries, they are not only financing and advising the construction of new jails, but also restructuring whole prison systems.

Prison Imperialism began in 2000 when the US and Colombia signed an accord to restructure Colombia's penal system following the US example. The first penitentiary built as a consequence of this project was La Tramacúa, finished in November 2000. Since then, overcrowding in Colombian prisons climbed to its highest level in recent history. In 2018, overcrowding was still at an unacceptable rate of 45.6%, according to government statistics. From the beginning, La Tramacúa has been hell for its inmates. Various prisoners have been victims of systematic torture, particularly political prisoners. The lack of access to healthcare is endemic and has resulted in deaths. Despite the jail's location where temperatures reach 100°F, ventilation is insufficient, and water is limited to between 10 and 20 minutes daily. Toilets rarely function, and inmates must use plastic bags and buckets. On at least four occasions, government and non-government agencies have encountered putrid food and food contaminated with fecal matter.

Colombia is based in the US model, with variations to adapt to the particularities of the Latin American nation. In the US the strike has an especially anti-racist character: the strike exposes the history of forced labor. After the Civil War and the end of slavery, the authorities began to detain Afro-descendants to demand that they work with little or no remuneration and thus assure the flow of profits to the pockets of big land owners and industrial capitalists. This situation continues in a system that incarcerates Afro-descendants, Latinos, indigenous persons, and poor people at rates that exceed their percentage of the general population.

The People's Human Rights Observatory recognizes that the struggles of the prisoners of La Tramacúa and of the US and Canadian jails are not isolated from each other, nor from the rest of the world. Prison Imperialism is not simply an attempt to spread the U.S. model throughout the planet. Prison Imperialism is part of the infrastructure of the US and NATO Empire in service to global capitalism, the same as the expansion of U.S. and NATO bases in the world, police militarization, border militarization, and the development of neoliberal economics. With all of this, we say to the prisoners and strikers in the jails of Colombia, North America, and the whole world: YOUR STRUGGLE IS OUR STRUGGLE!

**People's Human Rights Observatory  
Observatorio de Derechos Humanos  
de los Pueblos**

(which includes organizations from Colombia, the US, Mexico, Palestine, and elsewhere.)

# Heroic or Heinous: The Death Penalty Case of Thomas Porter

by Kevin “Rashid” Johnson, Minister of Defense, New Afrikan Black Panther Party (Prison Chapter)

## Who is Thomas Porter?

Thomas Porter is a 42-year-old Black man held on Virginia’s Death Row for the October 25, 2005 shooting death of a Norfolk, VA cop, for which he was charged, tried and convicted of capital murder.

His is a case that warrants close and broad public attention and action.

At his trial, it was undisputed that the cop walked up and grabbed him around the throat without warning, then tried to throw him to the ground. Thomas reflexively pushed the cop back, asking what he was doing. Without warning or explanation the cop pulled his gun and fired on Thomas but missed.

In a split second reaction, Thomas pulled and fired his own gun, fatally hitting the cop in the head -- a clear case of self defense. And particularly so, where the long-standing epidemic of US cops murdering Black males is now common knowledge.

But of course no laws recognize the murderous impunity of police towards men of color, nor any right to defend one’s life against such violence. Consequently, Thomas was convicted and sentenced to die for defending from being murdered by a cop.

## Comparing Apples and ... Apples

Now contrast his treatment with the recent “stand your ground” murder of a Black man, Markeis McGlockton, outside a Clearwater, FL convenience store.

On July 19, 2018 Markeis was in the store with his five-year-old son. When he came out, he observed his girlfriend and two other children being harassed by a white man, Michael Drejka, because they were parked in a handicapped parking spot. Markeis confronted Drejka and pushed him away from the car. Drejka then pulled a gun and killed Markeis, who was unarmed and was walking away.

Florida officials declined to prosecute Drejka, finding that Florida’s “stand your ground” law (the same that exonerated Trayvon Martin’s killer) allowed Drejka to “defend” himself -- despite [the fact] that he’d previously threatened to kill another Black man over a disputed parking spot.

In Drejka’s case, a white man killing an unarmed Black man who pushed him - because he was menacing his family - and walked away, was justified “self defense,” but not so in Porter’s case, where a Black male (a member of a social group routinely targeted for police murder) killed a cop who attacked and tried to shoot him without warning, provocation, reason or explanation. Instead Thomas was prosecuted for capital murder and sentenced to death.

At trial, Thomas explained his response to being attacked by the cop. He described a lifetime of witnessing cops menace, brutalize and murder Black men, and his very real fear of suffering the same fate at the hands of a cop who sneak-attacked and in fact *tried to kill him*. All to no avail.

This because in Amerika the police have assumed the role of violent impunity, containment and terror against Blacks that was previously exercised by slave patrols during the antebellum era, and by the Ku Klux Klan and similar white terrorist groups during the period of Jim Crow, against which Blacks were forbidden to defend or resist.

How many Black and Brown males in Amerika would still be alive if they’d had the presence of mind to defend themselves against murderous police attacks? But, like lynchings, cases like Porter’s are meant to vindicate a corrupt system and deter Black and Brown self defense. To send a message that in Amerika people of color must submit to the whims of murderous police.

Like in the recent cop murder of a 31-year-old Black man, Thurman Blevins, who was gunned down by Minneapolis, MN police on July 23, 2018 as he fled in fear for his life while begging not to be shot. And of course prosecutors quickly announced that the cops who killed him wouldn’t be charged.

## Porter Still Stands His Ground

Before I met Thomas Porter (when VA prison officials devised to house me on Death Row since July 10, to isolate me from others even though I have no death sentence) I had the opportunity to read rulings and pleadings in a federal lawsuit he’d brought challenging Virginia’s holding its death row prisoners in permanent solitary confinement.

His suit brought about the eradication of solitary on Death Row in VA and set a standard to be followed in other solitary confinement cases (See *Porter v. Clarke*, Case No. 16 - 7044 [U. S. Appeals Court, 4th Circuit, March 24, 2017]).

Before filing the case Thomas was warned by attorneys that he’d likely suffer retaliation by prison administrators and a rush to carry out his death sentence. In the interest of asserting the rights of all Virginia’s death row prisoners, Thomas ‘stood his ground.’ He filed the lawsuit and won the changes he sued for. As a result, he was met with the very retribution he was warned about -- he has suffered repeated physical abuse at the hands of officials, and at the time of the writing of this article, he expects an execution within 2-3 months. Yet he has remained undeterred.

One can only admire his backbone and tenacity, in the face of repeated attempts to take his life, first by a murderous cop, and then by the state for protecting his own and others’ rights to live and to humane treatment.

The fight for one’s basic human entitlements, especially to defend one’s life, are among the most fundamental human rights. And those who uphold this right, as did Thomas Porter, in a society like Amerika, which violently forbids these rights to those it continues to subject to brutal containment and oppression, are heroic in their own right.

Such a system should not be allowed the second chance to murder Thomas Porter, nor to validly criminalize Black and Brown self defense against murderous police.

**Dare to struggle -- Dare to win!  
All Power to the People!**

# Abolishing Death By Incarceration in Pennsylvania

<http://abolitionistlawcenter.org/2018/09/18/a-way-out-abolishing-death-by-incarceration-in-pennsylvania/> Comprehensive Study Shows that Life Without Parole Sentences in Pennsylvania are Imposed on the Young with Alarming Racial Disparities

Philadelphia County has 2,694 people serving life without parole sentences (LWOP), which is more than any other county in the United States and far more than any other country in the world, according to a new data analysis released today by the Abolitionist Law Center. A Way Out: Abolishing Death By Incarceration in Pennsylvania [Full Report] [Abridged Report] found Pennsylvania has 5,346 people serving LWOP, making the state a national leader in the use of the punishment; only Florida, with twice the population, has more people serving LWOP. State Representative Jason Dawkins and State Senator Sharif Street have filed legislation that would allow parole eligibility for all lifers after 15 years of incarceration.

The report refers to life without parole as “Death by Incarceration” (DBI). Key findings include:

Most of the people serving DBI were convicted and sentenced when they were 25 or younger, a period of life when brain development and maturation remains ongoing, according to recent neuroscientific research.

More than 70 percent of those serving DBI are over 40 and nearly half (2,377 people) are over 50. The practice continues even though research shows that criminal activity drops significantly after age 40 and despite the fact that locking up a person over 55 is two to three times more expensive.

Black Pennsylvanians are serving DBI at a rate more than 18 times higher than that of their white counterparts. Out of Philadelphia’s 2,694 people serving DBI, 84 percent are Black. In Allegheny County, 13 percent of the county’s residents are Black, but constitute 76 percent of those serving DBI sentences (409 out of 541 people).

“This report presents a definitive portrait of a punishment that is archaic, cruel, unjustified, and indefensible,” said Bret Grote, Legal Director of the Abolitionist Law Center and co-author of the report. “Death by incarceration sentences do not keep the public safer. The human and economic costs are staggering and growing by the year, as thousands of aging, rehabilitated men and women are locked away needlessly. Fortunately, there is also a rapidly growing movement determined to make parole eligibility for all lifers a reality.”

In all cases involving defendants 18 years of age or older, Pennsylvania law does not allow for individualized consideration of a defendant’s circumstances; instead it

mandates automatic DBI sentences to many who never actually killed or intended to kill anyone. As the report states, DBI is “a failed policy predicated upon the fallacy that the trajectory of a person’s life – including their capacity for rehabilitation, transformation, and redemption – can be accurately predicted at the time of sentencing.”

Avis Lee is an example of a person serving a DBI sentence because none of the particulars of her case were taken into consideration at sentencing – and may have made a difference. Ms. Lee has served 38 years of a DBI sentence due to a robbery committed by her brother that tragically went wrong and someone lost his life. Ms. Lee was only 18 years old and had been told by her brother to serve as a look out during a robbery. Ms. Lee had turned to drugs and alcohol after a childhood riddled with sexual abuse, violence, poverty, and the death of her mother. After the shooting, she flagged down a bus and told the driver a man was injured. For more than 25 years, she has had no disciplinary infractions in prison. Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Superior Court agreed to hear her claim that her mandatory life sentence was disproportionate because of her youth. There is hope for Ms. Lee, though not many others.

The Philadelphia DA’s Office is considering reviewing certain cases of excessive sentences, including mandatory life without parole sentences, and will pursue a lesser sentence when legally viable. The trend toward electing reform-oriented, less punitive district attorneys across the country could lead to similar efforts at sentence review being implemented in DA offices on a national scale.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1859229667524489/>

## Second Mass Call-In Against New Dehumanizing PA DOC Policies

by Amistad Law Project

<https://www.facebook.com/AmistadLaw/>

Friday September 14th hundreds of us took to the phones to stand up for the rights of people in PA prisons. Let’s keep up the pressure! Join us for a second mass call-in on Monday September 24th and then on October 2nd join us as take the capitol for Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration’s ‘Day of Action Against Death By Incarceration’ where we will speak out for parole eligibility for lifers and against these horrible policies.

Recently DOC Secretary John Wetzel and Governor Wolf announced a number of new punitive DOC policies that will violate prisoner’s rights and those of their families. Governor Wolf and the Department of Corrections want to censor and restrict books, increase surveillance of prisoners’ mail, violate attorney-client

privilege and institute cruel, restrictive visiting room policies which violate the American Disabilities Act and further discourage contact between prisoners, their loved ones and those professionals who work with them. On Monday, September 24th we are getting mobilized again. JOIN US AS CALL ON OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND CANCEL THESE PUNITIVE POLICIES.

We are asking everyone to make FIVE calls: Governor Wolf, Your State Senator, Your State Representative, Lt. Governor Candidate (and Gov. Wolf’s Running Mate) John Fetterman and DOC Secretary Wetzel. If you are limited by time that is ok, but lets make as many of these calls as we can. Our elected officials (and aspiring elected officials) need to hear from us. A sample call script and call in numbers are below:

Governor Wolf: 717-787-2500

Lt. Governor Candidate John Fetterman (currently Mayor of Braddock)- 412-654-4041 (Phone Number to the Mayor’s Office)

DOC Secretary Wetzel: (717) 728-2573

“Hi. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I’m calling to speak about the new DOC policies which will violate the rights of incarcerated people and their families.

I am calling because I’d like [Gov. Wolf/Lt. Governor Candidate Fetterman/Representative So and So/Etc.] to take action to see that these policies are cancelled and that the rights of incarcerated people and their families are respected.

These new policies will violate people’s rights in a number of ways. I would like to tell you about some issues with them. Under the new policies:

-all mail must now be sent to a private company in Florida where it will be scanned into a searchable database increasing surveillance on prisoners and their families. The original will be destroyed and a copy will be sent on. No longer will incarcerated people be able to touch a letter that their loved ones wrote with their own hand or a kid’s report card.

-All legal mail will be copied by DOC employees exposing it to be read in violation of attorney-client privilege.

-A DOC controlled marketplace for books will be established which is a monopoly and will increase censorship. No longer will prisoners friends and families be able to order them books from approved vendors such as Amazon. Community based and faith based books to prisoners programs will be cancelled.

# Save the Tierra Amarilla Youth Leadership Institute!

1848, 1988, 2018 - La Lucha Sigue  
Al Frente De Lucha

The land that has provided an education of our past, an understanding of our present, hope for the future and so much more for the Mexican people is once again under attack by the state and those who put personal financial gain over the liberation of the Mexican people. An entity of the government called the Merced de los Pueblos de Tierra Amarilla along with New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas is attempting to once again steal the land away from the Mexican people by claiming that they have more right to develop that land than those that have been its faithful stewards for nearly 30 years.

The future of the Tierra Amarilla Youth programs have never been at such risk for destruction by the state as they are right now. As you know, Al Frente de Lucha will not let them destroy the beacon of hope for the Mexican people and all oppressed people of the world that El



Students, teachers and volunteers at the Tierra Amarilla Youth Leadership Training Institute on liberated land in New Mexico, organized by Al Frente de Lucha.

Campo de Pueblo de Tierra Amarilla represents. We did not submit to their attempts of intimidation so on July 14th, 2018 they filed a complaint against us so we will once again be forced to take on the state in their courts.

We're asking for your support in waging yet another battle against the state so that our future generations

can experience the making of history. Hasta la victoria siempre.

Please donate here:

<https://www.gofundme.com/saveTA>

and help publicize the struggle to save the liberated land and people's projects of Tierra Amarilla.

## Student Protests Sweep Mexico

by Rob Smith

<<https://www.marxist.com/student-protests-sweep-mexico/print.htm>>

New waves of student protest have been erupting in the universities and colleges of Mexico City. Students in all the major universities in the capital have come out en masse in solidarity after 14 students at UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico) were injured by *porros* (semi-fascist shock groups) earlier this month.

The protesters have called for the attackers to be brought to justice and are now making a stand against societal violence and the insecurity of daily life. On September 3, students organizing in support of teachers' protests about low wages, were set upon by *porros*, leaving 14 severely injured. The victims belonged to the Science and Humanities Faculty of UNAM, which is the largest university in the country. After the attack, there were immediate solidarity protests from the other major universities in the capital: IPN and UAM.

On September 5, the main campus of UNAM was inundated with 40-100,000 students calling for justice and for authorities to reveal the masterminds behind the attack, who are suspected to be the university executives and the right-wing political parties who influence them. The attackers have been identified after intense popular pressure, but the puppet-masters remain unnamed. Revealing the corruption and brutality of the university bosses would escalate the rising tension the state is trying to reduce.

*Porros* are paid by the university executives to squash any form of student organization. They are reactionary students who have historically been used to break up strikes and protests by beating up protesters or vandalizing campus facilities in order to intimidate students and create an image of delinquency to discredit the movement as a whole.

They were used heavily in the 1980s as a counterinsurgency force by the PRI government. PRI is fused with the state apparatus due to its decades of dominance in Mexican politics. In return, the *porros* enjoy immunity and certain benefits in university such as free subscription to courses and preferential treatment.

Protests have continued to grow as more universities and colleges in Mexico City and the surrounding regions have come out in support. Following the traditions of the student movement in 1968, students organized themselves in Protest Committees across various institutions, which have scored many historic victories against the *porros* in the past but have not succeeded in eradicating their presence on campus.

Now students have revived the legacy of 1968 by forming an inter-university assembly to coordinate the Committees and agree on their demands and goals. 50 representatives from all institutions met on September 5 to plan student strikes of 24, 48 and 72 hours. The Assembly is calling for better pay for professors, improved teaching facilities to cope with the overcrowding of classrooms, free democratic elections of university directors and other executive positions, and an end to violence.

### Resentment against the system

The size of the protests and the speed with which they have spread reflect the deep resentment that has built up over years amongst the youth towards the capitalist system. The *porros* are not the main problem but have become a point of expression that has unleashed the accumulated anger on campus.

In the capital and across the country, the youth constantly feel on edge. The National Institution of Statistics (INEGI) reports that 76.8 percent of 18-year-olds nationally feel unsafe in their city. Women are violated and murdered on their way home from work on



a horrifying scale. From January-July this year there were 387 reported cases nationwide of *femicidios* (female homicides).

Add to this the decline in general living conditions. Mexico suffers from an increasing global trend of poverty and un- and under-employment. While the government celebrates annual reductions in unemployment figures, 49m workers fail to cover their basic needs with their earnings. The average cost of living for a student in Mexico City is 14,350 pesos per month set against average household income of a paltry 13,239 pesos. Now the students are saying: enough is enough!

The movement's demands have now been expanded to resist the debilitating violence that workers and youth suffer on a daily basis. Violence is a tool by the state to hamstring the student movement and cause people to live in fear. However, violence is a sign of a weak state threatened by the power of the masses.

### Students and workers: unite and fight!

Nevertheless, societal violence can't be solved overnight with a street march. Marxists in Mexico are involved in calling for a national protest to defend free, public education as well as protection from physical and economic violence. They also emphasize the need to link up the student movement with the wider labor movement. The protesters must realise the strength in organized struggle and join their cause with militant trade unions such as CNTE and SME (teachers' and electricians' unions respectively).

Students all over the world must fight for free education and challenge the injustice and violence of global capitalism. They cannot successfully combat this alone. The students' struggle is the workers' struggle and is an international struggle of the world working class.

Solidarity with the Mexican students! Expel the *porros*! End state violence! Workers of the world unite!

### On-Line Resources for Turning the Tide & ARA-LA.

You can find archives of *Turning the Tide* at [www.antiracist.org](http://www.antiracist.org) that go back more than 13 years.

In addition, there are several Facebook pages, such as [facebook.com/tideturning](https://facebook.com/tideturning), and [facebook.com/intercommunalsolidarity](https://facebook.com/intercommunalsolidarity). You can follow @ara\_losangeles on Twitter, and the De-Colonize LA! blog at [ara-la.tumblr.com](http://ara-la.tumblr.com).

## URGENT APPEAL

We need your financial support to continue sending the paper free to about 1700 prisoners around CA and the US.

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Postage alone for most issues comes to nearly \$1000. We would like to increase the size and frequency of *Turning the Tide*, but we can only do it with your support. If you're a prisoner and can send stamps or get someone outside the walls to subsidize your subscription, please do so. If you work with an info shop or other zine or record distro, please consider ordering a bundle of *TTT* to distribute; \$5 will get you 20 copies. And check out our 100X100 campaign elsewhere in this issue. If you live in L.A. or nearby, we can come to house meetings to speak and collect donations for the paper. Email [antiracistaction\\_la@yahoo.com](mailto:antiracistaction_la@yahoo.com)

# Spit and Dan -- Presente!

## Marking the 20th Anniversary of the Assassination of Lin "Spit" Newborn and Dan Shersty, Martyrs of Anti-Racist Action

Here is a round up from the TORCH Antifa Network of actions that took place across the country and around the world in solidarity with Dan Shersty and Lin Spit Newborn, the two Las Vegas Anti-Racist Action members murdered 20 years ago by neo-Nazis.

Comrades in Charlottesville started things off with a release of contact information exposing organizers of Unite The Right 2.0, which was scheduled to take place August 12, 2018 in Washington D.C.

In Richmond, VA, Antifa Seven Hills handed out memorial flyers and sparklers to spread the word about Dan and Spit in their local community. Later that night they unveiled a solidarity banner complete with fireworks to celebrate the #FuckTheFourth day of action. And of course an obligatory flag burn from some other friends.

Anti-fascists in Portland OR honored Dan and Spit with an impressive banner drop and messages of solidarity across the city.

Comrades from the Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement in NYC put up graffiti in solidarity with the call to action. "On this 20th anniversary of the murders of ARA comrades #DanAndSpit by fascists, we want to tribute these fallen fighters. Honor the dead and fight like hell for the living. #NeverForget #SmashTheFash

In Sydney, Australia, comrades brought the day of action down under with a powerful mural commemorating Dan and Spit, and submitted a picture of it to It's Going Down.

Antifa Sacramento put up a banner in honor of Dan and Spit, and anti-racist activists lifted up their names while taking to the streets for an anti-4th of July party that included an action at the local ICE building and a noise demo at the county jail. Actions took place in San Diego and L.A. as well. Seattle and Bloomington IN also held commemorations.

Lexington ARA created a write up for the day of action, posted at <https://t.co/2DPbHHQURs>

### Remember Lin Newborn and Dan Shersty:

#### Anti-fascists Murdered By Nazis

July 4, 2018 marks 20 years since Las Vegas anti-racists Lin "Spit" Newborn and Dan Shersty were entrapped and shot to death by neo-Nazis outside Las Vegas. Lin was 24, and Dan was 20.



Although they might have seemed like a clash of identities—Lin being a black skinhead singer-songwriter working at a local body-piercing shop, and Dan having served at Nellis Air Force Base to pay for his tuition, the two met and instantly formed a close friendship. They found affinity in piercings, Ska, punk rock and opposing the racist creeps that threatened them, their communities and the city they lived in.

Both regulars and known best friends in the music scene of Las Vegas, they were vocal about their opposition to the bigotry in the spaces they frequented and the uptick in Nazi bonehead crews in Las Vegas. Lin had started a "nazi terminator skins" crew to counter Nazi recruitment in the skinhead scene, while Dan had worked closely with Lin to form the Las Vegas Anti-Racist Action (ARA) chapter which distributed anti-fascist literature, staged demonstrations and confronted out and loud the white supremacist presence in the city.

Being the visible agitators for anti-fascist resistance at that time in Las Vegas proved to be dangerous for the two, and costly. Lin's house was shot at in response to speeches he had given at past demonstrations, Dan's car was broken into with his anti-racist pamphlets torn up, and the two had received dozens of threatening calls during this period. The two stuck it out with their sizable chapter having their back. Dan once said that "the gamble's part of the fun."

On the night of July third, Dan and Lin were driving to what they thought was a Fourth of July party with two girls from Lin's body-piercing shop. When they arrived, the two were confronted by three nazis who were specifically out for Lin. The two were shot multiple times while trying to flee into the desert. Dan was found on the morning of July fourth; when the same nazis who had shot them came back to clean up evidence. Lin was found on July sixth during a police investigation.

The murderers and their accomplices were eventually arrested and sentenced one by one over the span of ten years. Since then, anti-racists in Las Vegas and cities everywhere have told the story of Dan and Lin, a sobering reminder of what the nazis are willing to do when their trash is tolerated no longer; when unity and friendship steps up and fights back against efforts to oppress and take over.

Racist, white supremacist violence won't stop until we build the capacity to defend ourselves in throwing off racism, fascism and all forms of domination. Remember Dan and Spit!

— Lexington ARA (@LexingtonARA) July 5, 2018

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the day of action in remembrance of Dan and Spit. Our comrades may be gone, but they will never be forgotten. We will keep up the fight against white supremacy and oppression with their memory in our hearts!

## Autonomous Vehicle Technology Transforming Capitalist Workforce & State Surveillance

Self-driving vehicles are coming, rapidly, and the technology will transform the economy, the job market, the military, and through other related applications, the total surveillance state that will seek to maintain control over society during those enormous transformations.

In addition to the obvious targets of Uber and Lyft drivers, predictions at a recent industry conference on "Autonomous Vehicles" centered on long-distance delivery trucking. 48% of the cost of shipping is labor, and eliminating drivers will boost profits dramatically, even short term, as well as allowing for "tandem operation" of 4-5 trucks in a row, resulting in huge fuel cost savings for the trailing trucks. Robotic vehicles are required for the maneuver. In addition, the US military, which has been pushing for drones and other military robotics both because of the unreliability of human soldiers, sailors and pilots, and because of anticipated conflict with China, which has a huge numerical troop advantage, is betting heavily on self-driving tanks.

Speakers at the industry conference included Dr. Robert Sadowski, Chief Roboticist, and Paul Rogers the Technical Director, of the US Army Tank Automotive Research, Development & Engineering Center; Patti Robb, the head of Intel's Silicon Valley Autonomous Vehicles Lab; Jody Kelman, in charge of Self-Driving product for Lyft; Justin Erlich, head of Policy, at the Autonomous Vehicles & Urban Aviation division of Uber; and Johan de Nysschen, President of Cadillac at General Motors. The next conference on Autonomous Vehicles is scheduled for February 25-27, 2019 in Silicon Valley.

As Marx predicted, capitalism is constantly required to increase the "organic composition" of capital through automation that reduces the need for human labor and human sentience in labor processes. Just as Walmart and China are moving towards totally robot warehouses, where goods are sorted and packaged for shipment untouched by human hands, shippers and truckers are moving to eliminate unionized longshore workers, teamsters and troqueros with containers and self-driving



trucks. This reflects the deepening crisis of capitalism, where even the sweated "contractors" and gig economy "self-employed" can't provide enough profits.

But the technology involved with sensing the road has many other applications, particularly for border control and other aspects of surveillance. Quanergy has been testing the use of its sensors for the US Border Patrol and ICE. Being tested in Del Rio, they can capture activity across 360 degrees and a distance of about 100 meters. The software can automatically pinpoint people moving past and alert border agents. Lined up in large numbers and paired with cameras that snap images when movement is detected, producing a three-dimensional representation, these sensors could provide a detailed picture of border activity and help agents organize their activities. Quanergy has tested its sensors using solar panels, which eliminate the need for power lines. But for effective use along most parts of the border, authorities would have to install new fiber lines or cell towers to make the data captured available in real time.

The NY Times reports that Joe Martinez, Val Verde County's sheriff, has helped test the Quanergy sensors. He said he believed they could be a big help along some parts of the border. Law enforcement and other security operations are likely to find them even more immediately applicable in already wired or wireless urban settings.

Anduril, founded by Palmer Luckey, who built the virtual reality company Oculus and sold it to Facebook for \$2 billion in 2014, is testing technology in the Rio Grande Valley that uses digital cameras and artificial intelligence to track people coming across the border. Luckey was forced out of Facebook in 2016 after it came out that he supported a political action group spreading anti-Hillary memes. Trae Stephens, who co-founded Anduril with Mr. Luckey, discounted Luckey's history of political provocation when the Times asked him about it in an interview. "It is a national security company," he said.

Cogniac is another Silicon Valley start-up, offering technology for identifying people and objects in camera images. They are exploring similar border security applications, but given the interest police departments have in facial recognition analysis of body-worn and other cameras, license plate readers and other visual surveillance, including by drones, they are likely to find a ready market in many other law enforcement agencies absorbing counter-insurgency policing as their 21st Century mission. General Electric is piloting "smart streetlights" in Columbus OH that incorporate microphones, cameras and cell-phone capture technology, and the self-driving sensors will no doubt find application in controlling such surveillance.

# The Fall of Empire

[col. Writ. 9/7/18 (c)'18 Mumia Abu-Jamal]

Imagine living in almost any country in the world, except the United States.

Imagine looking at news accounts reporting on the U.S. presidency for the last 2 years.

Imagine what millions of people think of the current president, and through him, the American people.

Try to imagine how they could see both as anything other than mad.

America looks and sounds like a nation in the throes of madness.

Loud, abrasive, offensive, addicted to name-calling and an air of meanness, how could they seem otherwise?

Threatening war one day, loving and praising dictators



the next, how can the U.S. Empire seem anything other than schizophrenic?

It looks like a circus act; like a clown juggling atom bombs.

The praises of neo-Nazis, the siren's call to fear, the calls for a wall, are all emblems of the fall of Empire.

For an empire that cannot reasonably run itself can hardly run or control other states.

And even when Donald T leaves his imperial throne, the US will long bear the mark of infamy, for people of the world will have seen the real face of America, one it will not soon forget.

—(c)'18maj

## The Impact of Elections on the US Left and of the Left on the Elections

**Editor's note:** The Trump administration has had a clear negative impact on migrants, prisoners, militarized policing, communities of color and poor people generally, on the promotion of misogyny and white supremacy, and on the environment. The supposed economic "growth" has not alleviated homelessness or real un- and under-employment, and has only increased economic inequality. This has impelled many to see the "mid-term" elections as pivotal, and to direct their efforts towards the election of Democrats, disregarding the lessons of the past.

Two different alliances, one "progressive" and more wedded to the Dems, and one avowedly "socialist" and working both inside and outside the Dems, have emerged. Unlike them, we think the Democratic Party continues to be the graveyard of popular movements, and that the electoral arena is unavoidably a spectacle designed to obtain "the consent of the governed" to continue to live under capitalism and Empire.

But we're reprinting excerpts from their statements here, because in their liquidation of any expressed opposition to colonialism; to police terror, mass incarceration and the total surveillance state; or to US military aggression in Latin America, Africa, Europe and Asia, they demonstrate the illusory identification with the empire that leads them to see the Democratic Party as in any way a vehicle towards liberation.

The question before us is how to advance the anti-colonial, anti-capitalist politics and solutions that will strengthen the "outside" movements. These "extra-parliamentary" movements are the only way to undermine and delegitimize the system that generates genocide, war and environmental devastation no matter which capitalist party is in power.

### Left Unity Call Sets Path For Organizational Coordination, Capacity Building

by: Chris Riddiough, The Washington Socialist Weekly Update, June 15, 2018 [excerpts]

On May 23, the Left Inside/Outside Project hosted a call that brought together representatives of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CCDS), Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO), and LeftRoots. The call focused on these organizations' approaches to electoral politics. It provided an opportunity to explore potential for political alignment among the part of the left that broadly agrees with the strategy of building power inside and outside electoral politics, and inside and outside the Democratic Party.

Although there are significant differences among (and within) these organizations, generally they see electoral politics as crucial for the left to engage in. While electoral politics has its limitations, it presents huge opportunities, which the experiences of these organizations demonstrate, including a path to governing. In the US today, where the fight against the far right must utilize all possible methods, it's also a necessity.

The call was moderated by Rishi Awatramani of LeftRoots. Speakers included Sendolo Diaminah of FRSO, Rossana Cambron of CPUSA, Christian Bowe of DSA, Maria of LeftRoots and Janet Tucker of CCDS.

Speakers focused on the importance of strategic planning in terms of electoral politics and its place as part of a broader movement strategy. As Diaminah noted, political control is important not only for the victory of socialism, but even before we reach that point. Cambron added that elections are part of the building progress. Thus elections are not a question of voting for the lesser of two evils, but rather are a response to the question of which candidate will create the best environment to move things forward.

Maria from Leftroots stated that their members are involved in building independent political organizations led by communities of color. They came to value electoral

work through experiencing the limitations of winning visionary campaigns that were transformative, but didn't translate into long-term governing power.

Christian Bowe noted that DSA is working to build capacity to field our own candidates, use elections to build DSA, and views elections as one critical area of struggle. DSA wants to use data generated from work in elections in other kinds of campaigns like union drives, Medicare for All, and housing work. He added that it's ultimately not the name of the party that determines what an elected person does once in office, but the interests and power of their constituencies.

Breakouts were held to allow participants to discuss their organization's work and that of other groups. Janet Tucker (CCDS) gave a brief presentation on her small group discussion. The lively discussion covered how folks in different organizations but the same region might collaborate, digging into the nitty-gritty of data sharing among organizations and campaigns, how we sum-up candidate experiences and build a deeper bench of candidates, and moving into questions of governance after election day.

The notes show a lot of local and historical experience that should be mined for lessons. One participant wrote, "we have the tasks of enfranchising working class people, nominating socialist and/or progressive anti-corporate candidates where they are viable, training people to become candidates, developing the campaign capacity to elect them, but in the near term defeating right-wing incumbents with whoever is nominated. In most cases this will involve diverse coalitions of the 99% that the 1% systematically seeks to split using wedge issues, especially racism and patriarchy." Another participant stated "This is a 'CIO moment.'" — comparing today to the 1930s when the CPUSA threw its resources into creating a center-left alliance to build a new labor movement.

Rishi Awatramani (LR) closed with a mention of shared questions and themes from the small groups: What organizations and forms do we need to build to scale? How do we build with our core constituencies while building independent political organizations and struggling with[in] the Democrats? How do we change the balance of forces, which sometimes requires supporting neoliberal Democrats while moving our own anti-neoliberal politics? Who do we see as our key 'base?' How do we build the infrastructure that we need to have an independent political organization?

If we're thinking about building a majoritarian movement, that involves our base and beyond, we need a new 'we.' We understand class/race/gender don't dictate politics, it's on us to build the political subject we need.

The Inside/Outside project anticipates scheduling another left unity call that will go into more depth in some of the questions raised during this session.

*Written by Chris Riddiough based on a report by Calvin Cheung-Miaw. Riddiough is a longtime MDC DSA and a member of DSA's National Political Committee.*

### Our Revolution and Progressive Democrats of America Announce Strategic Partnership

Our Revolution (OR) and the Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) are excited to announce a formal partnership established by both organizations' national boards. OR and PDA will work together on advancing progressive issues like Medicare for All and restoration of voting rights for those who've paid their debt to society, as well as electing progressive candidates this November. PDA and Our Revolution have cooperated on actions against Trumpcare and the Affordable Care Act repeal, and in support of the People's Platform, a series of progressive and transformative core policies and issues.

"Our Revolution looks forward to our continued work and partnership with PDA," said Our Revolution President Nina Turner. "Before Sen. Sanders' historic presidential

run, people thought ideas like Medicare for All, a \$15 minimum wage, and tuition-free college were impossible to achieve. In only a few short years we've changed the narrative on what is possible in this country and now the American people are on our side."

Turner added, "Our partnership with PDA will continue to change the narrative about what is possible, and result in many more newly elected progressive leaders who will work to implement our progressive vision for the country. Progressive Democrats of America was the first national group to endorse Senator Sanders for President, and since Our Revolution's founding, has been our partner on issues, candidates, and reforming the Democratic Party."

Incoming PDA Executive Director Alan Minsky said, "PDA's relentless 'Run Bernie Run' campaign, launched in 2014, directly contributed to Sen. Bernie Sanders' decision to run for president in the Democratic primaries. PDA and the nationwide grassroots effort that evolved into Our Revolution worked throughout the 2016 campaign to support Sen. Sanders' out-of-nowhere challenge for the Democratic nomination. PDA and OR continue to empower the millions-strong movement that Bernie Sanders' campaign energized."

Minsky added, "Working together, OR led by President Nina Turner and incoming Executive Director Dr. Heather Gautney and PDA will continue to grow the progressive political revolution necessary to elect progressive candidates and build towards a progressive governing majority, and thereby enact widely popular reforms including: Medicare For All, a Living Wage, Free College and Vocational Training, Clean and Fair Elections, Inclusive Prosperity, Protecting the Climate, and Equality and Justice for All. Stunning upsets in this year's Democratic primaries by progressive candidates—including Ben Jealous, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Andrew Gillum, and Ayanna Pressley—as well as consistent public polling results have shown that Americans support candidates and organizations that speak out and stand up for the 99%, even when that requires directly challenging the status quo and incumbents who are insufficiently dedicated to achieving needed progress."

Our Revolution has over 600 local groups in 49 states and nine countries. Our Revolution's Board includes former Ohio (state) Senator Nina Turner, Labor organizer Larry Cohen, Native American leader Deborah Parker, Jim Hightower, Jim Zogby, former Chief of Staff for Sen. Bernie Sanders Huck Gutman, , Our Revolution South Carolina member Lucero E. Mesa, and Our Revolution Illinois Chicago member Richard Rodriguez. For more information on Our Revolution visit:

<https://ourrevolution.com>

Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) is a grassroots political action committee. PDA's Healthcare Not Warfare campaign brings together the need for a comprehensive universal health care system with our advocacy for scaled-down military spending and increased reliance on diplomatic foreign policy. The PDA National Advisory Board includes Barbara Lee, Keith Ellison, Raul Grijalva, and James McGovern; as well as progressive leaders such as Michael Moore, Kennedy, Lila Garrett, Thom Hartmann, Medea Benjamin, and Dr. Paul Song, M.D. For more information on PDA, please see:

<http://www.pdamerica.org>

**Editor's note:** As we noted at the beginning, these statements, in their bare lip service to "communities of color" (Inside/Outside) and "Healthcare Not Warfare" (PDA/Our Revolution), betray a lowest-common-denominator search for unprincipled cross-class "unity", and a belief in US Exceptionalism and its non-existent democracy. We note that in a recent letter to Trump regarding the peace-making efforts of North & South Korea's presidents, Bernie Sanders advised keeping "maximum pressure" on North Korea rather than moving quickly to end US hostility. We cannot allow these weaknesses to prevent people from seeking a truly transformative alternative, or to give the system a chance to overcome its political and economic crises and contradictions and get a new lease on life.

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# TURNING THE TIDE

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ★ Sep 23 Puerto Rican Anniversary of Hurricane, Grito de Lares 11a, Hollywood & Highland
- ★ Sep 27 German Antifa Speak (invitation event) Contact us for details
- ★ Oct 1 Deadline for KPFK membership to qualify for LSB Elections [kpfk.org](http://kpfk.org)
- ★ Oct 8 Indigenous Peoples' Day - Dia de la Raza (Counter Columbus Commemoration)
- ★ Oct 24 1st Anniversary Stop Killer Cops Vigil at DA Jackie Lacey's HQ  
4-6 PM Join BLMLA, families who lost loved ones to state terror, 211 W. Temple, LA
- ★ Nov 12 TTT 30th Anniversary Dinner fundraiser, 6:30-9:30pm Peace Center  
Check us out via [www.antiracist.org](http://www.antiracist.org), [facebook.com/tideturning](http://facebook.com/tideturning), [ara-la.tumblr.com](http://ara-la.tumblr.com)

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STOP KILLER COPS! ABOLISH RACIST POLLING!**

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