

Prison Art Newsletter

Working to Expand Artistic and Political Expression to All

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Prison Draws Protesters

Demonstrators come from throughout the CA to voice concerns about conditions at Corcoran

By Bethany Clough, *The Fresno Bee*

About 50 demonstrators with complaints about state prisons hoped they would be heard beyond the barricades, police tape and prison gates they stood behind at Corcoran State Prison.

Demonstrators had a litany of complaints: Prison guards are too brutal. Prisoners with HIV and hepatitis C don't get enough medical treatment. There aren't enough drug-treatment programs. The death penalty and the "Three Strikes" law should be abolished.

Although the protest was coordinated by the San Francisco-based California Prison Focus, demonstrators came from throughout the state and from a long list of organizations. The demonstration came on the heels of a report released by California Prison Focus last month, alleging many of the same issues demonstrators protested Saturday.

Prison officials could not be reached to comment Saturday, but Terry Thornton, a California Department of Corrections spokeswoman in Sacramento, called the report's accusations irresponsible and said the prison group has its facts wrong. "They're all allegations with no substance," she said, adding that prison officials would investigate the complaints.

New accusations surfaced Saturday. Three inmates have died of HIV in the last two weeks, said Judy Greenspan, chairwoman of

the group's HIV/Hepatitis C in Prison committee. The group sent a letter requesting an investigation into the deaths, saying the inmates did not get enough pain medication, were not transferred to a prison hospice and were not recommended for "compassionate release."

"How many deaths will it take until they realize something is wrong there?" Greenspan said. Prison officials were not available to verify the deaths or comment on the group's accusations.

But Janis Fonseca of Los Angeles said her husband is proof that something needs to change at Corcoran. She said her husband has been held in solitary confinement for four years. During a fight inside the prison, he lost an eye, the use of his right hand and can no longer walk, she added. Neither the frequent solitary confinement nor the fight should have happened in a well-managed prison, she said.

The demonstration was one of several throughout California and the country Saturday. Inmates at Pelican Bay State Prison in Northern California planned to begin a hunger strike Saturday to protest conditions there. Many protesters who came from San Francisco said they chose to drive [the 250 miles] to Corcoran because it needs the most help.

"Corcoran is symbolic of the mismanagement and brutality of the California prison system," said Corey Weinstein, the group's founder.



Mentally Ill Abused at WCC

By Mark LaRue, Washington Corrections Center, Shelton
People often depend on drugs to cope with psychological problems. In or out of prison this can be the only way of controlling erratic behavior. These drugs makes the user's interaction with others difficult if not impossible.

Mental health personnel at the Washington Correction Center (WCC) prescribe medication for that purpose when they believe it's necessary. Prisoners in the Intensive Management Unit (IMU) get these from nurses who make rounds three times a day.

During these rounds nurses are accompanied by prison guards, who have taken it upon their selves to decide when or if prisoners should receive their medicine. This is often based on whether a prisoner is liked by guards or poses some kind of problem for the staff through out the day.

Nurses quietly condone this practice and say nothing against staff when they beat, gas, or place prisoners in strip Cells for protesting a denial of medications. Other prisoners intercede to prevent the abuse, only to be told by Doctor Waters that he is unable to change procedure. Because the Lt. Has backed officer Wisty and other custody officials who are responsible for these acts.

When notified of this or other offenses perpetrated against mentally ill inmates, prison administrators have sided with the oppressors and cared less if prisoners are harmed by the denial of psychiatric care ordered by mental health providers.

This sort of treatment comes as no surprise to prisoners or those who support their rights under the Constitution. Those who run the prison or uphold the law under a capitalist system. Respect for rights or needs of oppressed people only when it suits their interests.

In view of this we encourage people to unti with us in demanding better care for mentally ill at WCC. As complicit as they may be in all this, nurses should be the only ones asking prisoners about or dispensing their medications if these are required by a doctors responsible for treating a prisoners' psychiatric condition.

Anyone concerned by this who has a desire to help should contact Mark for more information:

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Prisoners Die in Moroccan Prison Fire

By ALI NAGI, Associated Press Writer
November 1, 2002. EL JADIDA, Morocco - A fire raged through an overcrowded Moroccan prison early Friday as inmates slept, prompting a frantic attempt to flee the inferno that killed at least 49 people and injured some 90 others, including two guards, authorities said. Many inmates died of smoke inhalation, while others were trampled in a chaotic search for safety during the blaze, which was believed to be the worse fire ever at a Moroccan prison.

Hundreds of people, including anguished relatives of inmates, gathered outside Sidi Moussa prison, on the northern coast of Morocco, waiting for authorities to release names of the dead. "I was supposed to see my husband, Karim, today," said a woman in tears, who only gave her first name, Fathia. "I have no news of him and don't know where to find the victims' list." Police and soldiers erected barricades to keep the crowds away from the walls of the prison, which is located about 180 kilometers (112 miles) south of the capital, Rabat. The cause of the fire, which started around 1:30 a.m. (0130 GMT), was not immediately known, said the Moroccan news agency MAP, citing sources it did not identify.

Officials were initially quoted as saying the fire may have been caused by an electrical problem. However, Deputy Interior Minister Fouad Ali Al Himma told The Associated Press that the cause was still unknown. The nature of the fire, which was limited to one of the prison's four buildings but spewed smoke through the adjoining blocks, led authorities to fear the death toll would climb, Al Himma said. "With the large number of inmates killed by asphyxiation, we fear the toll is going to increase," he said.

The injured were taken to the regional Mohammed V Hospital, and the most seriously hurt, including eight who were in a "comatose state," were being transferred to a burn unit at a hospital in Casablanca, about 90 kilometers (56 miles) away, the news agency said. The deaths sparked immediate debate on the overcrowding at Moroccan prisons. The North African nation has some 30 prisons and detention centers built to hold 40,000 inmates but filled with an estimated 57,000, according to a recent report by the Moroccan Observatory on Prisons.

Abderrahim Jamaï, president of the observatory, called it "a humanitarian scandal without precedent" in the country's prison system. "It's not only the overpopulation of prisons, it's also the inhuman behavior of the administration and the permanent violation" of international regulations on the detention of prisoners, he said. The most fatal prison fire in recent years occurred in 1997 at the Oukacha prison in Casablanca. It claimed 28 lives, Jamaï said.

The Sidi Moussa prison in the coastal city of El Jadida was built in 1994 to hold 1,000 prisoners but actually houses 1,313, penitentiary officials said. Moroccan King Mohammed VI expressed

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his condolences to the families of the victims. Outgoing Prime Minister Abderrahmane Youssoufi and other Moroccan Cabinet ministers were traveling to the site to head an inquiry into the fire and to organize assistance to victims' families.

Stop Prisoner Rape Accuses FBI of Ignoring Male Rape Victims in New Crime Report

LOS ANGELES - The FBI's practice of including only female rape victims in its annual Uniform Crime Report on violent crime is outdated and ignores the vast numbers of men who are raped and sexually brutalized in prison, the director of the non-profit human rights group Stop Prisoner Rape said today.

Lara Stemple, executive director of the Los Angeles-based group, stated that the FBI's approach to rape statistics in its newly released report trivializes the suffering of male rape victims. The group is calling on the FBI to revise its categories to include the rape of men as a violent crime.

In studies of male prison inmates, one man out of every ten reports that he was raped in prison. "The rape of men in prison is a serious human rights abuse that is dehumanizing and sometimes deadly. Victims have been left beaten and bloodied, they have suffered long-term psychological harm, and they have contracted HIV. When we look at violent crime as a nation, we cannot ignore these victims," said Stemple.

"The FBI's conscious disregard of male rape short-circuits attempts to address this issue on a policy level. If any other group in society was so blatantly excluded from crime statistics, we would hear an enormous outcry," Stemple charged.

Unlike many state penal codes that use a gender-neutral approach to rape, the national crime report defines forcible rape as, "(t)he carnal knowledge of a female forcibly against her will." The categories of the FBI's Uniform Crime Report were created in 1929, according to the report. The forcible rape of men is explicitly excluded from the annual analysis of the "violent crime" in the U.S., which draws from the reports of 17,000 law enforcement agencies throughout the country. The FBI's report states that it "has traditionally defined rape victims as female."

Stemple noted that the Prison Rape Reduction Act of 2002, legislation which is pending before Congress, will begin to uncover the extent of the problem by creating a commission to study the problem.

"Congress seems to understand that this is a serious problem," Stemple said. "Now it's time for the FBI to come around. It's not 1929 any more, and Americans shouldn't be given crime statistics compiled with 1929's assumptions about rape and gender."

Albert Woodfox Files Appeal Presenting Evidence of Innocence

NEW ORLEANS -- Albert Woodfox of the Angola 3, who has spent more than 30 years in solitary confinement at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, filed a new appeal this week in a Louisiana state court, seeking to prove his innocence and win his freedom.

Woodfox, 55, and his co-defendant and friend, Herman Wallace, 61, are both serving sentences of life without parole for the 1972 murder of a prison guard, Brent Miller. Both men have been held in solitary confinement since April 17, 1972, the day of the murder.

Woodfox and Wallace have always contended that they did not commit the murder and that they were falsely charged by prison officials. At the time, Woodfox and Wallace were leading activists among African-American prisoners seeking to improve conditions at the slave plantation-turned-prison, which was still racially segregated and notorious for brutality and violence.

Woodfox's appeal, called an Application for Post-Conviction Relief, presents new evidence to support the men's contentions. It was filed in the 21st Judicial District Court in Amite, Louisiana.

Woodfox has provided the court with sworn statements from two of three living prosecution witnesses, both of whom have now recanted their testimony against him and Wallace. Woodfox's attorneys have also obtained prosecution files which prove that witnesses for the state lied under oath with the knowledge of the prosecution. In addition, Woodfox has identified new witnesses who state that a deceased Angola prisoner named Irvin Breaux confessed to the Miller murder.

The new court filing includes declarations from a number of pre-eminent experts in DNA testing and forensic sciences who state that new forensic procedures, unavailable in 1972, could be used to exonerate Woodfox and Wallace.

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Imperial Promises

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

It is well for those who know to be leery of promises made by an Empire. For they will fulfill those they feel necessary to fulfill, and simply ignore those they feel are worthy of ignorance.

That is the very nature of empires. At the end of the Vietnam War, a war-weary U.S. government, ready to leave Indochina for the shores of the United States, pledged to help reconstruct the war-ravished Vietnam, and in fact, agreed to pay reparations.

Over 30 years later, and not a dime, not a U.S. nickel has been paid to the People's Republic of Vietnam. Nor did the U.S. ever have any real intention of fulfilling the terms of the peace agreement signed at the negotiating table in Paris. An estimated 3 million Vietnamese people killed in the war, the rice fields and rivers poisoned by the herbicide, Agent Orange (which continues to poison an untold number of Vietnamese, generations later!), CIA assassinations of NLF, civilians and party leaders, torture, and thousands of American-fathered Vietnamese babies born in scorn, and the USA left in an imperial huff, and never looked back.

The lessons from history are indeed instructive, as we look at the looming specter of war on the horizons in Iraq. Predictably, there are promises from Bush Administration spokesmen that they will introduce "democracy" into Iraq, an echo of their promises in Vietnam. What motivates them, in truth, isn't 'democracy' (if you doubt this, you need only ask the citizens of Florida, who haven't seen any semblances of 'democracy' in the last few years), but the lure of 'black gold', 'Texas tea', or, as they used to say in the intro to that TV comedy, "The Beverly Hillbillies", "...Oil, that is."

Again, a lesson from history, about what the Americans really care about, from a previous U.S.-Iraqi conflict, about 30 years ago:

"General [Ahmed Hassan] Bakr nationalized Iraqi oil in 1972. President Richard Nixon immediately began to plot the reversal of his declaration, as America had done when Iran nationalized its oil in 1951. Nixon, along with the Shah, orchestrated the arming of the Iraqi Kurds against Bakr. Iraq was placed on America's list of nations that sponsored terrorism. This course of action was abruptly halted in 1975, when then Vice President [Saddam] Hussein and the Shah reached an agreement that ceded control of the strategically vital Shatt-al-Arab waterway in the Persian Gulf to Iran. In retrospect, it seems all too clear that Iraq's control of this waterway was the primary concern behind America's agitation against Iraq. Once the American-controlled Shah owned this passage to the Gulf, all American support to the Kurds ceased entirely. In commentary on this, Henry Kissinger stated, 'Covert operations should not be confused with missionary work.' Under Nixon, the arming of Iran by the United States was dramatically stepped up." [Pitt, William Rivers & Scott Ritter, "War on Iraq: What Team Bush Doesn't Want You to Know" (New York: Context Books, 2002, p. 18)]

Human Rights? War on Terrorism? Fight for Democracy? Like a 3 Card Monte game at 42nd Street in midtown Manhattan, the real play keeps moving, right before your eyes. But it's never what you think it is.

Recently, the Bush Administration's mouthpiece publicly advocated the assassination of a foreign leader. Bush flack Ari Fleisher, asked about the costs of a war with Iraq, answered that the cheapest price could be one bullet. When pressed, he said that the government wasn't advocating assassination, but noted that if someone in Iraq wanted to make the price of the war cheap, "one bullet" (for Saddam, of course) would be cheapest.

Imperial Promises. War without End. For profit and for Privilege. Forever. Amen.

Source: Afrikan Frontline Network, nattyreb@comcast.net



British Judges Criticize U.S. on the Prisoners Held at Guantánamo

By Neil A. Lewis

A panel of three senior British judges used extraordinary language in a ruling this week to criticize the United States' detention of prisoners from Afghanistan at Camp X-ray in Guantánamo Bay in Cuba.

The three judges, ruling in a case involving a British subject held at Guantánamo, said detention of prisoners at the United States naval base there appeared to be a violation of both international law and the concept of habeas corpus developed centuries ago in England.

Although the judges said the holding of prisoners at Guantánamo with no recourse to a court created an unacceptable "legal black hole," they acknowledged that they could do little about it. But it appeared evident that the judges were intent on sending a message to an appeals court in the United States that is considering the same issue.

The panel, the rough equivalent of a federal appeals court in the United States, ruled in the case of Zumrati Juma, the mother of 23-year-old Feroz Abassi, who has been detained at Guantánamo for 10 months.

"What appears to us to be objectionable is that Mr. Abassi is subject to indefinite detention in territory over which the United States has exclusive control, with no opportunity to challenge the legitimacy of his detention before any court or tribunal," they said in an opinion written by Lord Phillips, the master of the rolls, one of Britain's most senior judicial posts.

"It may be the anxiety that we have expressed will be drawn to their attention," Lord Phillips wrote.

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Geoffrey Robertson, a prominent barrister and authority on human rights law, said in a telephone interview from London that the judges were clearly hoping to influence the pending case before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

"They were expressing that it is inconceivable for something like this to occur in the English system," Mr. Robertson said. Moreover, he said it was meant to show that the country that originated the writ of habeas corpus - which allows any imprisoned person to challenge a detention before some body - felt strongly about the issue.

A three-judge panel of the United States appeals court is scheduled to hear arguments in the case on Dec. 2. The judges will hear an appeal of a ruling in July that gave a significant legal victory to the Bush administration.

In that ruling, Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly said that the American naval base at Guantánamo was not formally part of the United States and, that as a result, the detainees did not have constitutional protections. Under well-established principles, even noncitizens have some constitutional protections once they are inside the United States.

In dismissing the cases brought on behalf of two Britons, an Australian and several citizens of Kuwait, Judge Kollar-Kotelly said she did not believe that any court would have jurisdiction over the Guantánamo detainees. There are more than 600 prisoners now being held at the base, according to the Defense Department.

Eugene R. Fidell, a Washington lawyer and an authority on military law, said the ruling from London was significant because the judges did not have to comment on the legality of the detention once they decided that the case was out of their jurisdiction. Instead, he said, they offered a view on how the writ of habeas corpus should apply in this case.

In acknowledging that they could not issue any orders in the case, the British judges declined the request of Mr. Abassi's mother that they direct the British foreign secretary to make representations to Washington.

"There can be no direct remedy in this case," the opinion said. "The United States government is not before this court, and no order of this court could be binding on it."

Canadian Supreme Court Backs Prisoners' Right to Vote

CTV News Staff

The Canadian Alliance and victims of violence criticized a ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada Thursday, which said it is unconstitutional to bar penitentiary inmates from voting in federal elections.

In a narrow 5-to-4 ruling, the top court said a section of the Canada Elections Act that disqualifies prisoners serving terms of two years or more from voting in federal elections violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and, therefore, is no longer in force.

Canadian Alliance critic Randy White complained the decision means large concentrations of inmates in some parts of the country could swing the results of close elections. The result, according to White, will be that those who break the law can now make the law, by electing federal MPs.

The lawyer defending Canada's inmates disagrees. Arne Peltz said if prisoners are allowed to make the laws, they may be more inclined to obey the laws. "There will be a little more dignity in prison and I think over time that will help reduce crime over the long term," Peltz said.

Alliance MP Vic Toews says the decision "cheapens everyone's vote." And Independent Saskatchewan MP Jim Pankiw says Canada's "politically correct" justice system has insulted the victims of crime.

At least one victim of violence says prisoners do not deserve that right. Gary Rosenfeldt's stepson, Daryn, was murdered by B.C. serial killer Clifford Olson in the 1980s.

"You are talking about people who didn't give a damn about society, society's values, at the time they went into the prison system," Rosenfeldt said. "What's next? Will we have Paul Bernardo maybe running in Kingston?"

Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin wrote for the majority that all Canadian citizens are entitled to vote, their criminal status notwithstanding. "The right to vote is fundamental in our democracy and the rule of law and cannot be lightly set aside," McLachlin wrote.

Section 51 of Canada Elections Act prohibits from voting "every person undergoing punishment as an inmate in any penal institution for the commission of any offence." It also bans voting by certain people suffering from mental illness and every person involved in "corrupt or illegal practices."

Prisoners who are sentenced to two years or more usually serve out their sentence in a federal penitentiary, while shorter sentences are served in provincial facilities and local jails. Under the 1993 law, only inmates in penitentiaries were barred from voting.

Provincial election law across the country is a patchwork, with prisoners allowed to vote in some jurisdictions but not in others.

CTV's Mike Duffy says Thursday's ruling effectively forces the government's hand and ensures new legislation will have to be drafted. "It means that the federal government is going to have to bring its law and its practices into conformity with what the Supreme Court wants," Duffy said. "I'm certain, however, that

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Voting....

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we'll see federal politicians actually going into prisons campaigning for the votes of people like Paul Bernardo and Clifford Olson."

The case before the court involved Richard Sauve, a former member of the Satan's Choice Motorcycle Club. He is serving a life sentence for first-degree murder. Sauve, along with the Native Brotherhood Organization of Stony Mountain Institution, the John Howard Society and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, challenged the law.

Lawyers for Sauve argued that Section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guaranteed every citizen the right to vote. Since Sauve was a citizen, his lawyers argued that the Canada Elections Act violated his Charter rights.

The federal government argued the legislation was justified because it sent a message to prisoners about the importance of respecting the rule of law, noting that the loss of the vote is a legitimate punishment. They also argued it would demean the electoral system to let prisoners vote.

But the top court sided with Sauve, saying the infringement on his rights did not meet the test for what's considered "reasonable."

"The wholesale disenfranchisement of all penitentiary inmates, even with a two-year minimum requirement, is not demonstrably justified in our free and democratic society," Justice McLachlin wrote.

Sauve first challenged the Canada Elections Act in the early 1990s. He won but the federal government narrowed the legislation to prohibit voting from only those prisoners serving more than two years.

In 1999, Sauve challenged the new law at the Federal Court of Appeal and lost. That prompted him to try to get the case before the nation's top court.

According to Statistics Canada, there are about 31,000 adults behind bars on any given day.



Editorial Comments

Welcome to another edition of the *Prison Art Newsletter*. Thank you for taking the time to read us. This issue was put together in somewhat of a hurry because of the holidays, which means that much of the news is not all that new -- but hopefully still informative.

We are coming upon a new year and I can't but help hear the silence from the U.S. left on the prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, who are being held against well established international and UN mandates on the treatment of political prisoners and POWs. This newsletter would like to play some small part of changing that. The charges against the so-called detainees are so bogus that the military has started releasing some of them. Of course they were released without any self-criticism from the U.S. government for kidnapping them in the first place.

I was reading my Workers World today and I came across this: "The general Marxist view of legality in class society is that it arises out of the class struggle and reflects class and national struggles. For example, in the United States in the mid-19th century it was illegal for three or more workers to gather for the purpose of discussing the formation of a trade union. Such behavior was regarded as an illegal conspiracy in restraint of trade. Only the class struggle established the right to organize and to force the bosses to engage in collective bargaining." In other words, you as a prisoner at a point where those workers were 150 years ago. While it is not yet a crime for prisoners to organize, it's definitely an infraction. The U.S. Supreme Court, just as it was with the case of the labor unions of old, has ruled that the right of prisoners to organize is not one the state is willing to respect - certainly not without a struggle.

I attended the big anti-war demonstration in San Francisco awhile back. The police reported 50,000 protesters, but I think there were more like 80,000 of us. The demo received little local coverage, and what there was slanted against us. They reported, for example, that the crowd was under 10,000. There were over 100,000 anti-war protesters at the Washington DC rally! The *N.Y. Times* coverage was also minimal and derogatory. Bruied on page 8, it estimated the crowd at "thousands" and said organizers were disappointed at the turn out. NPR did the same slam job on the anti-war demonstrations. Due to public outrage, however, the *Times* was forced to belatedly admit that there were at least 100,000 protesters and that organizers were pleased. I am constantly amazed at the blatant lies being fed to the American people by the bourgeois media.

I get a good deal of mail from prisoners outraged over their medical treatment or the abuses being heaped upon them by the state. When I write about these things the governments censors me. They don't want you to know what they are doing to prisoners in New York or Angola or Clallam Bay. So in reporting on these abuses the state censors us on the basis that we are illegally facilitating communication among prisoners. Some might go so far as to actually call it NEWS! Anyway, if this keep up, I am going to need a lawyer before too long.

POW Robert "Seth" Hays Being Denied Medical Treatment

On October 3rd 2002, Robert "Seth" Hayes, a former member of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army and a political prisoner who has been jailed for the past 30 years, was moved against his will from the hospital ward where he had been receiving treatment for Hepatitis C and type 2 Diabetes to the general prison population in Clinton Correctional Facility (CCF) in Dannemora, New York. The transfer on October 3rd and the consequent elimination of the minimal level of medical care that Mr. Hayes was previously receiving has resulted in a dire medical emergency that could result in a serious deterioration of Seth's medical condition.

Diabetes and Hepatitis C. are dangerous illnesses which are potentially fatal if not properly treated. Diabetes can lead to a wide range of problems including: heart and blood vessel disease, skin disorders, kidney disease, nerve damage, and it may lead to blindness and damage to extremities if it is not properly treated. Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus whose symptoms include jaundice, fatigue, abdominal pain and nausea, and which causes liver disease in 20% of its victims and eventually kills 5% of those infected. Mr. Hayes has long been affected by symptoms of dizziness and weakness, headaches caused by pressure building up behind his eyes, loss of feeling in his extremities, and low energy, but at least he was receiving some degree of medical monitoring while in the hospital ward.

However, now that he has been returned to the general prison population, Mr. Hayes no longer receives any monitoring of his blood sugar levels, and John Mitchell, the CCF administrator responsible for hospital facilities, has refused to allow Seth or any of the 40-50 other diabetics in the prison to purchase personal blood sugar testing units from their own funds. This means that all diabetics in the prison are injected with a pre-arranged amount of insulin regardless of how much blood sugar they currently have in their bodies. Seth has also been trying to gain "disabled status" through the American Disabilities Act due to the debilitating effects that his diabetes has on him. Such status

would result in Seth being able to legally refuse to work in conditions that negatively affect his health, but to date, the prison administration has refused to accept Seth's requests.

Furthermore, Seth is part way through a six to twelve month drug treatment to address the damage done to his liver by Hep C. Despite the fact that he has been prescribed regular doses of the drugs Pegatron and Rebetron (which have numerous serious side effects including driving up blood sugar and blood pressure) the prison administration has cut off all monitoring of his medical status, claiming that it is no longer needed.

The US Supreme Court has previously ruled that since prisoners are wards of the state, they are entitled to a minimum of medical care, at least on par with the minimum available to those outside of the prison system. It is an outrage that despite repeated pressure from the prisoners at Clinton Correction Facility, the prison administration has done nothing to provide them with the bare minimum of medical treatment required. Technically speaking, this deliberate indifference and refusal of medical monitoring for prisoners such as Seth is nothing less than a death sentence with an indeterminate execution date, mandated and carried out by the prison administration.

We call upon you to phone, fax and write letters to John Mitchell, the administrative nurse responsible for transferring Seth out of the hospital and to Lester Wright, the Chief Medical officer of the New York Department of Correctional Services who is responsible for all health matters in the State of New York to demand the following:

- 1.) That Mr. Hayes be immediately re-admitted to the hospital ward and that he be provided with twice daily monitoring of his blood sugar levels and full monitoring and all necessary treatment for his Hepatitis C;
- 2.) That all diabetics at CCF be entitled to receive twice daily blood sugar tests upon request, and that all diabetics in the prison be authorized to purchase their own personal blood sugar monitoring units.

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Can't Jail the Spirit, 5th Edition, Released

The fifth edition of *Can't Jail the Spirit* is hot off the presses. *Can't Jail the Spirit* is a great collection of biographies of political prisoners held in the United States. Within the new 234 page edition are many new and updated biographies in this edition, along with a number of introductory pieces by ex-political prisoners and others.

The selling price is \$20 a copy plus \$4 for shipping and handling. Checks or money orders should be made out to CEML and sent to:

CEML
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December 16th Committee
P.O. Box 67
Garwood, NHJ 07027

Seth Hays....

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3.) That Mr. Hayes be recognized as disabled due to the effects of diabetes according to the provisions of the American Disabilities Act.

[please note: when speaking to prison officials please refer to Seth as Robert "Seth" Hayes, prison ID number 74A2280. Claiming to be defending Seth's rights to confidentiality, the prison officials will refuse to talk about any specifics of Seth's case with you unless you are a family member, and they will not explain to you why they are refusing Seth treatment. Therefore, when you call, it is best for you to tell them that you are aware of their appalling disregard for the medical rights of Seth and other prisoners and to re-iterate the demands listed above without asking questions requiring them to answer any questions about Seth's or any other prisoner's condition. If you have any questions about this or any other matters, please get in touch with the Robert Seth Hayes Emergency Medical Committee at rshec02@yahoo.ca or at the address below.]

The two prison officials to contact are:

Dr. Lester Wright, Chief Medical Officer,
Department of Correctional
Services, Albany, NY, 12226, USA.
Phone: 518-457-7072

John Mitchell, Nurse Administrator,
Clinton Correctional Facility, Box 2000,
Dannemora, NY, 12929 Phone (518) 492-
2511 x6100. [note: if Mr. Mitchell is rude
or unprofessional to you when you call him, please lodge a complaint with Superintendent Daniel Senkowski at (518) 492-2511 x2000].

Remind these officials of the New York State Department of Correctional Services mission statement which states that they are to retain inmates in safe custody until released by law and to offer stable and humane "community" environments. Denying Seth medical treatment goes directly against this mission statement that these officers are sworn to uphold.

Please get in touch with the Seth Hayes Emergency Medical Committee at the address below to let us know if there are any other ways in which you are able to help us out, and to inform us that you have called or written the prison authorities. Your timely action can make a very real difference in helping to preserve the health and even save the life of a long time freedom fighter and political prisoner unfairly jailed for more than 30 years. Act Now!

*Robert "Seth" Hayes Emergency Medical Committee,
c/o Quebec Public Interest Research Group
2130 Mackay, Montreal, QC, H3G-2J1 Canada*

Prison Paradox

By William Raspberry

Prisons were supposed to be the means by which we separate criminals from their communities, leaving those communities safer, stronger and more capable of enforcing their own social codes. And the prisoner, pained by the separation, was supposed to change his behavior and work to make himself fit for readmittance to the community.

But in some communities -- notably in the poor inner cities -- the treatment has backfired. Like an overused antibiotic, it has left the prisoner untreated and unchastened, the community unprotected and the society demonstrably worse off.

That, at least, is a principal conclusion of "Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment," a collection of criminal justice essays edited by Marc Mauer of the D.C.-based Sentencing Project and University of Hawaii professor Meda Chesney-Lind.

I won't try to summarize the 16 essays because they cover the range of problems associated with incarceration: mandatory sentencing, welfare, immigration, the imprisonment of women, the denial of the vote to former inmates, prison as industry, etc. Let me look, instead, at one of the authors whose essay makes the general point that incarceration taken to an extreme leaves communities worse off.

And we have taken it to an extreme, says Todd R. Clear. The professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York writes: "Beginning in 1972, the prison population started a pattern of unrelenting growth in annual increments (from a base of around 200,000), lasting for over a generation and continuing today" -- and with little regard for crime rates, economic cycles or demographic changes. The result is a 500 percent increase in incarceration, with more than 1.3 million inmates in prisons and jails, with the burden of the increased incarceration falling most heavily on poor black and Hispanic communities.

But Clear's point isn't the unfairness of the system or that incarceration is bad. It is that incarceration, when taken to the extreme, takes on a life of its own with its own unanticipated consequences.

At the most obvious level, overuse of incarceration reduces its stigma and, therefore, its deterrent power. Young men of an earlier generation were shamed by the label "jailbird." But in some communities, being locked up is such a commonplace event that hardly anyone takes notice of it. We're fast approaching the point at which it's the odd young man who hasn't been locked up -- or who has any respect for the criminal justice system.



But overuse of incarceration also has the effect of taking huge numbers of black fathers away from their families and out of their communities.

Well, aren't the communities better off without those criminals? As Clear notes, however, these men aren't only criminals. They are also likely to be the family male role models and disciplinarians (even when their own behavior is less than exemplary) and, as such, important in early socialization of the children, especially the boys.

According to Clear, this informal social control -- first in families, then in small networks of families -- helps to build both discipline and opportunity structures. Then: "Children who grow up in areas where substantial amounts of human capital are not easily acquired struggle with inadequate schools, limited leisure time choices and insufficient formative supports. The systematic absence or weakening of male sources of support . . . makes a bad situation worse and adds a further impediment to overcoming the disadvantages of birth."

Clear and his fellow authors are careful not to argue that inner-city crime should be ignored, or that inner-city criminals should be treated less harshly for acts that send others to jail. There is a narrower -- and in public policy terms, more difficult -- point. As Clear puts it: "High levels of incarceration concentrated in impoverished communities have a destabilizing effect on community life, so that the most basic underpinnings of informal social control are damaged. This, in turn, reproduces the very dynamics that sustain crime."

It's a fascinating argument, but it leaves one important question unanswered: If not jail, then what?

[Editor's Note: Then What? How about socialism, which can provide jobs for all, free medical care and higher education, and an end to exploitation and oppression?]



New Video from the Freedom Archives: Jalil Muntaqim: Voice of Liberation

Jalil Abdul Muntaqim (formerly Anthony Bottom) was 19 years old when he was arrested. He is a former member of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army, and is one of the longest held political prisoners in the world.

This documentary is a unique opportunity to visit and hear Jalil's story.

Jalil was born October 18, 1951, in Oakland, CA. His early years were spent in San Francisco. Jalil participated in NAACP youth organizing during the civil rights movement. In high

school, he became a leading member of the Black Student Union, often touring in "speak-outs."

After the assassination of Dr. King, Jalil began to believe a more militant response to racism and injustice was necessary. He began to look towards the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense for leadership and was recruited into the BPP by school friends who had since become Panthers.

Two months shy of his 20th birthday, Jalil was captured along with Albert "Nuh" Washington in a midnight shoot-out with San Francisco police. When Jalil was arrested, he was a high school graduate and employed as a social worker.

While in San Quentin prison in California in 1976, Jalil launched the National Prisoners Campaign to Petition the United Nations to recognize the existence of political prisoners in the United States. Progressives nationwide joined this effort, and the petition was submitted in Geneva, Switzerland. This led to Lennox Hinds and the National Conference of Black Lawyers having the UN International Commission of Jurists tour U.S. prisons and speak with specific political prisoners. The International Commission of Jurists then reported that political prisoners did in fact exist in the United States.

In 1997 Jalil initiated the Jericho Movement. Over 6,000 supporters gathered in the Jericho '98 march in Washington DC and the Bay Area to demand amnesty for US political prisoners on the basis of international law. The Jericho Amnesty Movement aims to gain the recognition by the U.S. government and the United Nations that political prisoners exist in this country, and that on the basis of international law, they should be granted amnesty because of the political nature of their cases.

Jalil has filed numerous lawsuits on behalf of prisoners. After many years of being denied the opportunity to attend college, Jalil graduated with a BS in Psychology and a BA in Sociology in 1994.

During his imprisonment, Jalil has become a father and a grandfather. Jalil has worked as an educator of other inmates and practices organizing and advocacy whenever possible to ensure the most adequate, humane treatment for all people. He has been repeatedly punished for these activities, through physical abuse, formal discipline, and numerous prison transfers.

For more information about Jalil Muntaqim and his writings: <http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/profiles/muntaqim.html>
<http://www.prisonactivist.org/pps+pows/jalilmuntaqim/>

Edited and produced by Eve Goldberg and Claude Marks in November 2002 and based on an interview done in August 2000 by John O'Reilly and Nina Dibner. VHS 20 minutes.

Produced by The Jericho Amnesty Movement and the Freedom Archives. And available for \$20 plus \$1.50 shipping (\$2.50 outside the US).

Selling Crafts and Artwork

What Can Be Sold: Any hobby, craft, painting, music, or other form of artwork produced by prisoners that is capable of being handled for sale may be sold on the prisonart.org web site.

What We Charge: Most prisoners are charged a ten percent fee to help pay for our communication lines, web server, postage charges, etc. Progressive political prisoners do not pay.

The Purchase Procedure: Once the buyer selects an item and enters his or her credit card information, the prisoner will then be instructed to ship the object to Prison Art, who will in turn forward it on to the purchaser. After the item has shipped the buyer's credit card will be charged for the purchase amount, plus applicable shipping and handling charges. Unless specifically instructed to do so by the purchaser, the prisoner will not know the name of, or any other information about, the person buying his or her artwork.

Refunds: In the event a purchase is not consummated, Prison Art will return the entire purchase price to the buyer. Ten days after a purchase has been consummated the sale will be considered final. Prison Art will ship all returned items back to the prisoner (or his or her designee) at the returnee's expense.

Caveat: Not all submissions of artwork to Prison Art will be posted to the website, and not all material posted will be sold.



Painting is titled Grandma Jumping Bull by Political Prisoner Leonard Peltier.

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