

the defenestrator

a newspaper for hope and refusal

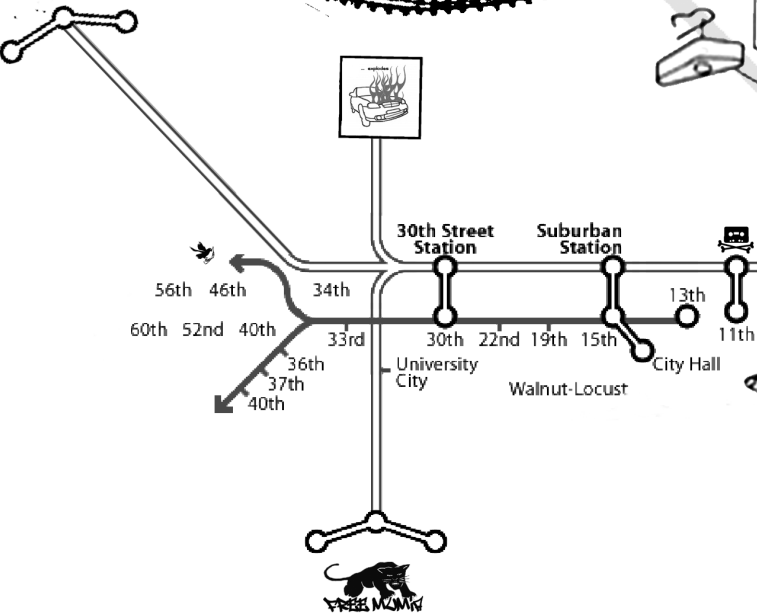
issue 44 April 2009

Chestnut Hill
East
Gravers
Wyndmoor
Mount Airy
Sedgwick
Stenton
Washington Lane
Germantown
Wister

mumia abu jamal denied trial

women challenge DHS

the angola 3



high hopes for low power radio

abolishing the prison industrial complex

philly budget wars



North Philadelphia

uprising in tanzania

file sharing pirates

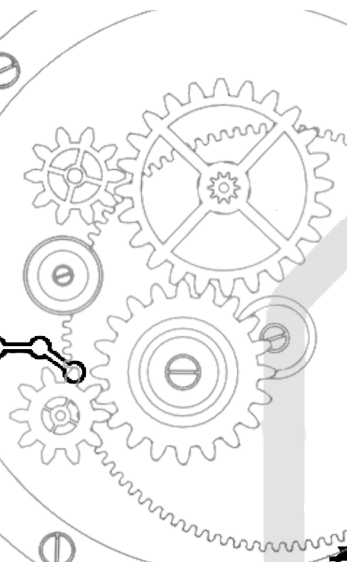
- Eastwick
- Terminal A
- Terminal B
- Terminals C
- Terminal E
- Philadelph International Airport

- Susquehanna-Dauphin
- Cecil B. Moore
- Girard
- Fairmount
- Spring Garden
- Race-Vine

Delaware River

- Lombard-South
- Ellsworth-Federal
- Tasker-Morris
- Oregon
- Pattison

we can live without capitalism





the defenestrator

The defenestrator is Philly's sporadic newspaper for resistance, creative revolution and action. To defenestrate Power means total refusal of its tools and tentacles. Like the Hussites who had their oppressors thrown down from the Prague castle into the angry mob below, the defenestrator wrestles power and privilege from its highest and most protected strongholds and casts the beast out of the window and down into the angry hands of the people.

Prison Staff! Caution ! Protected Private Property

This newspaper remains property of the sender unless it has been personally and materially accepted by the prisoner to whom it has been addressed. In the event that the prisoner is denied direct access to this publication, it must be returned to the sender with notice of reasons for failing to deliver to addressee.

Get on the defenestrator email list!

We send out announcements for demonstrations, emergency mobilizations, benefit events and defenestrator events. If you want on, send a blank email from your address to defenestrator-subscribe@lists.riseup.net or click the link on our website. The list is low traffic (usually about 1 message a week) and easy to get off if you so choose.

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Special Thanks to the Autonomous Spontaneous Chester Ave Editing Team for the donation of all those commas, dashes and grammars.

The Move 9 Are Up for Parole in April or May 2009

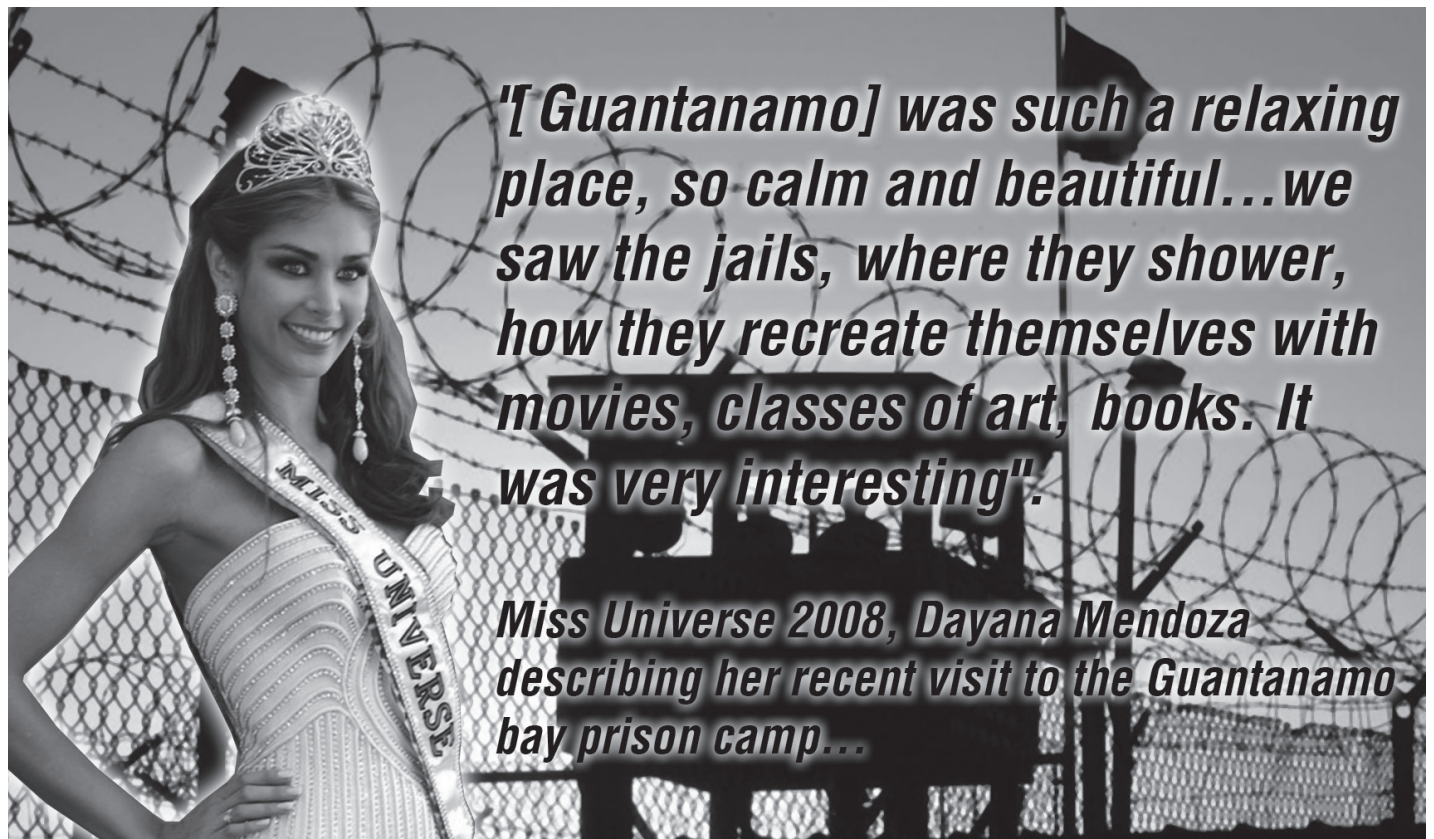


In the next month or so, the MOVE 9 will once again go before the PA parole board. Even though there is no reason why they should not be paroled, we all know that they won't be paroled without serious pressure from the people. The MOVE 9 are innocent and should never have been imprisoned at all, yet they have been in prison for 31 years as of this year. Enough is enough! We're calling on all fair-minded people, all those who not only believe in righteousness but will also will take a stand for it. Don't allow this rotten government to keep innocent people in prison any longer. Contact the PA parole board and demand the release of the MOVE 9. Contact your state and US Senators, your state and U.S. representatives to demand an end to this abominable injustice. Flood the parole board with calls & letters. Remember, they can only get away with this injustice if we allow them to. Never underestimate the power of the people.

Join MOVE at 11th & market st. in Philly from 12:00 til 3:00pm on Saturday, May 16, 2009 to protest the ongoing, unjust imprisonment of the MOVE 9.

For more information on the move 9 and the contact info for the pa. parole board, go to our web site (www.onamove.com) or call us at 215 387-4107 or email us at onamovellja@aol.com

Remember Chuck, Debbie, Delbert, Eddie, Janet, Janine, Merle, Mike and Phil!



"[Guantanamo] was such a relaxing place, so calm and beautiful...we saw the jails, where they shower, how they recreate themselves with movies, classes of art, books. It was very interesting".

Miss Universe 2008, Dayana Mendoza describing her recent visit to the Guantanamo bay prison camp...

Blackwater CEO Erik Prince Resigns in Latest Attempt to Rebrand Tarnished Mercenary Firm

by eian

According to Democracy Now, "...Erik Prince, the founder of Blackwater, has announced his resignation as the company's CEO. The move comes weeks after the company changed its name to Xe in an attempt to rebrand the firm." Xe is currently one of the pentagon's three largest private security contractors. Blackwater is one of an increasing number of large, private military contractors - criticized by many as unaccountable mercenary companies - that employ many former military and US government officials such as Joseph Cofer Black the former head of the CIA's Counter Terrorist Center. These organizations are also known to employ former soldiers from nations with horrific human rights records including, in the case of Xe, 60 former soldiers and police from Chile who were trained during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Xe has been under increasing scrutiny after their employees murdered 17 Iraqi civilians in Baghdad on September 16th 2007, and are faced with numerous lawsuits for disregarding the safety of their employees operating in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Blackwater had been operating in Iraq without an Iraqi Government license and was denied a licence by the Iraqi Government when it first applied for one in January of this year. The Pentagon subsequently decided not to renew its contract with Xe.

EPA Halts Permits for Mountain Top Removal

by eian

The environmental protection agency announced this Tuesday that it will be holding hundreds of permits being sought by resource extraction companies seeking to blast mountaintops to obtain coal. The EPA will be holding these permits until it can evaluate the environmental impact of mountaintop removal coal mining—particularly the practice of dumping waste called “tailings” into streams and wetlands—in accordance with the Clean Water Act.

According to ABC news, “Under the Clean Water Act, companies cannot discharge rock, dirt and other debris into streams unless they can show that it will not cause permanent damage to waterways or the fish and other wildlife that live in it.”

The action by the EPA has come in response to lawsuits by environmental groups.



FUND FOR SURVIVOR SUPPORT WORK

Philly's Pissed believes in supporting survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence in a way that provides options and allows the survivor to make their own decisions. We think it is important for survivors to have choices that do not rely on cops, government or big nonprofits. Who can offer better support to survivors than people and communities close to them?

We have a little bit of money to support other people doing this work in their own communities. We are very excited about work that creates alternatives to the police and criminal justice system, work that supports survivors who are people of color and/or trans, work that is being done in rural areas and work that is about sustainability and long-term change.

If this is you, please write to phillyspissedproposal@gmail.com or to PP c/o Timothy, 921 S 50th Street, Philadelphia PA 19143. Tell us a little bit about who you are, what you do and the money needs of the work you are doing. We will be able to give several groups money ranging from \$100-\$500 each. You do not need to have any kind of 501(c)3 or nonprofit status. Deadline is May 1st; please feel free to write us if you have questions or need more info.



Cab Drivers Win Ruling Over PPA in PA Supreme Court: Step in Winning Back Basic Rights in the Industry



by Todd Wolfson

On Friday February 20th, The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in the case of the Taxi Workers Alliance et al vs. The Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA). In a 5-2 decision, the court ruled in favor of the Unified Taxi Workers Alliance (UTWA) giving the Commonwealth Court jurisdiction over PPA and offering taxi drivers, as well as cab and dispatch companies, a place to seek redress in regards to PPA regulations.

The core of the ruling was that the PPA was a state agency and was ignoring procedures that state agencies must follow in administrative proceedings. This decision offers individuals and organizations in the taxi and limo industry a set of procedures and an

oversight body where grievances can be brought forth around issues such as fines, GPS machines, credit cards and other industry regulations.

Members of the Unified Taxi Workers Alliance celebrated the victory as an important step in winning back simple workers rights in the industry. Ronald Blount, the President of the Unified Taxi Workers Alliance and the principle claimant in the case, discussed why this is a landmark decision for drivers. Mr Blount explained, "the PPA kept jumping the fence between a local and State agency acting as a rogue body with no oversight." He went on "They were able to raise a fine in one day, reduce it the next, and raise it again the following day... they issued Executive orders overnight without a public hearing and the court system for taxi violations is unconstitutional in that they would hold a hearing with no witness present and still find the driver guilty."

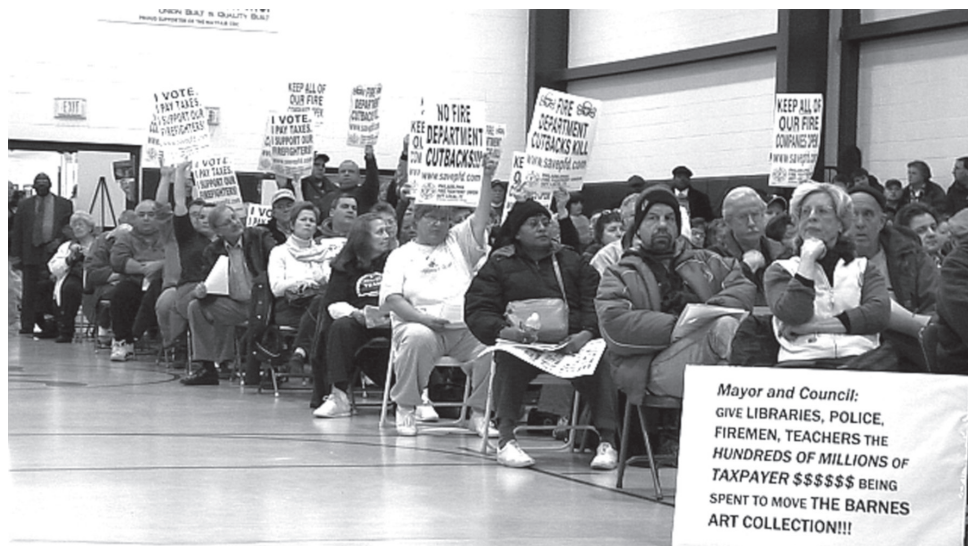
Based on the Supreme Court decision, the PPA must work with the State's other taxi regulator, the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Furthermore, the PPA must now follow the Pennsylvania Document Law, which states that any new rule or regulation must first be presented to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC). Through the IRCC, all parties can submit comments and be present for a public hearing. This is a dramatic change from PPA's previous operations where there was no

review process. The IRRC can either approve the regulation or dismiss it. If IRRC passes it, the regulation then moves to the Attorney General Office to see if it is legal regarding Pennsylvania law. Again all parties voices are heard.

Taxi drivers in Philadelphia believe that forcing the PPA to operate in tandem with the PUC will dramatically alter how the regulatory body operates. Currently the highest fine the PUC charges drivers is around \$200. On the other hand, the PPA fines drivers in excess of \$1500 for a single violation. Moving forward, drivers believe this discrepancy will have to be rectified and most likely drivers' fines in Philadelphia will drop precipitously. Putting the ruling in perspective, UTWA's spokesperson John Hough, explained that this will have a dramatic effect on the lives of drivers. In this moment of economic crisis "drivers are struggling to put food on the table." He went on, "the exorbitant PPA fines, which until now could not be challenged, were taking food off the tables of drivers and their families and putting that hard earned money in the bloated account of the PPA, leading to over 20 employees at the PPA making salaries over \$100,000." Mr Hough concluded, "We look forward to working with the IRCC, PUC and PPA to develop a fines structure that matches the real conditions of drivers across this city and region."

Our City – Our Budget

an update on the struggle to save Philly libraries and all city services



Sucker State citizens get rowdy against Fire Department cuts at a budget meeting

by Paul Walker

When Mayor Nutter organized the Town Hall Meetings in December of last year, the last thing he had on his mind was transparency in government, let alone input into the budgeting process. What he was really doing was laying it out plain to the people of Philadelphia: buck up, you lose. Boy did he get an earful. I'll never forget the look on his face as hundreds of residents of Southwest Philly lined up to take a turn at the mic, letting him know just how pissed they were, while the crowds in the seats taunted and cajoled the Mayor, Library Director Siobhan Reardon and the panel of cronies they had brought along with them.

Children stood with their mothers and told the Mayor why they simply couldn't afford to lose the libraries, rec centers and fire engines. One after the other they held the facts up in his face: cuts to public services would mean more illiteracy, more gun violence, more incarceration. The Mayor just shrugged. Another message that was repeated over and over was that nobody had been talked to – there had been no input.

Around this time, the Coalition to Save the Libraries formed, showing its strength at the court injunction which ultimately stopped Nutter from carrying out his planned closure of 11 neighborhood branch libraries. Other victories followed. We thwarted library director Siobhan Reardon's attempt to wreak havoc on the library system by increasing staffing requirements during the unfolding crisis. Then we brought it home to a cozy Love Your Library Valentine's Day Event at 7 of the 11 branches, showing the powers that be what we need our libraries for: education, community and empowerment.

The Penn Project for Civic Engagement's budget meetings were the Mayor's answer to an overwhelming cry for accountability and input into the budget process. Four meetings held in opposite corners of the city (no meetings were held in Kensington, Frankford, Fishtown, North Philly, or

Southwest Philly, to name a few neighborhoods deeply affected by proposed budget cuts) drew nearly 500 people each to come out and participate.

The Coalition for Essential Services formed in response to these proposed Budget Meetings and the need to break out of the "eat your young" model that would leave us all fighting for scraps, and choose instead to rely on solidarity and mutual self-interest to bring us together and develop some real power. It was a perfect moment for a coalition to form, and in the wake of a victorious (though unfinished!) library struggle, there was the momentum to pull it off. The Essential Services Coalition, initially made up of Neighborhood Networks and The Coalition to Save the Libraries put forward a bare bones platform: no cuts to essential city services: find the money. The firefighters, working up their own protest movement, signed on, as well as the City's white collar union and as the February meetings progressed and as people got to talking it started to snowball: Casino Free Philly, ACORN, Justice for Janitors, Kensington Welfare Rights Union, Philadelphia Student Union, Acorn and numerous other community organizations.

More than an exercise in democracy, the meetings were an exercise in bureaucracy. People were given a worksheet with options of cuts and revenue options. Each choice was given a point value, approximately \$2 million per point so that if your group, through scuttling services and raising taxes, reached 100 points you had (supposedly) balanced the budget. The meetings were divided into groups of 15 to 20 people who were thus tasked. Instead of working within these stark confines, we put together a flier which proposed holding corporations accountable to the city: ending the tax abatements, instituting Pilot Programs (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) so tax-exempt companies like Verizon or UPenn would be forced to make cash payments to the city to offset the services they use. We proposed raising the wage tax with a rebate for low income

workers and closing a corporate tax loophole which has earned PA the monicker of "the sucker state".

We hit it hard with the fliers and were vocal in our breakout groups, putting these options on the table, often with equally militant resistance from the moderators. At each of the three meetings I attended, my experiences differed. At the first meeting, the whole group (with the exception of two who decided to leave for another group) consensed to make no cuts and decided instead to only discuss revenue options. In the second group I was a voice in the wilderness, aggressively silenced once the moderators figured me out. The third group only managed to cut the streets department (a bad idea, I think – ever heard of the bubonic plague?) and administrative expenses, while protecting police, fire, libraries, recreation, and more.

I think that the meetings had a variety of purposes. One, to conduct an extensive survey of some of the more vocal segments of Philly as to what cuts and taxes would be palatable. Two, to provide cover for any such action and three, to provide the appearance of public involvement. What was amazing to me, much like the rest of the Library Coalition movement, was watching the dialogue shift from the opening meeting to the final one. What happened, is that we won. It was a limited victory, but aren't they all?

I felt a slight sense of awe as I sat in that last church auditorium while the moderator held up the flyer we had spent the last weeks handing out in the thousands, and addressed a panel of policy makers. "What about tax abatements?" "What about the PiLoT program?" "Do we really need to make cuts?" Those were the questions we had put on the table and they were being addressed to the people directly responsible for making the budget.

The future of this struggle is uncertain. As the library doors remain open and the

Mayor backpedals under attack it seems as if the pressure has begun to diminish. The real fight is still ahead of us. The Mayor only committed to keep the libraries open until June when the budget is decided. On March 19th, as we go to press, the Mayor will present his budget to City Council, whose responsibility it is to finalize and sign the budget.

At this stage it is vital that we show City Council that our neighborhoods and our movements have teeth, that we can mobilize in our self-interest and that we can make things messy if they try and strip away vital services. To this end the Save the Libraries Coalition is working on holding a series of neighborhood meetings at Library branches at the end of April where community members can discuss the impact of potential cuts as well as alternatives and ways to mobilize to save our essential services and impact the city budget.

The Library Coalition has open meetings most Saturdays. For more info, and to get involved contact save.11.libraries@gmail.com or call 1 866 962 7796

There are meetings happening citywide around many of the threatened services – keep your ear to the ground, stay involved or get involved! This is a great time to step up and fight for the future of our city!

Other folks fighting the cuts:

Neighborhood Networks: 215.568.4990
www.phillynn.org

Firefighters Local 22
www.savepfd.com



Exercises in bureaucracy: a breakout group shuffles papers

PHILLY BUDGET WARS 2.0

WE WON'T PAY FOR YOUR CRISIS

TAX THE RICH, NOT US!

By Sean West and Scott Pinkelman

It would be an understatement to call the recent struggle against Mayor Michael Nutter's proposed service cuts anything but amazing. Under the banner called the Coalition for Essential Services, a movement of neighborhood groups, most of the city's major unions, health care activists, students, clergy, block captains, seniors and many more essentially put such a fire under our Mayor's rear that he was forced to abandon many of his plans to balance the budget by cutting services to working people and poor neighborhoods. After witnessing many lively protests of The Coalition to Save the Libraries such as the "People's Indictment of Mayor Nutter" and a "People's Contempt of Court Citation", it was surreal to see the movement's slogans co-opted by Nutter as he announced his FY 2010 budget on March 19th in City Hall chambers as "The People's Budget."

We have won amazing victories because we challenged Mayor Nutter's budget. Last year, Mayor Nutter stated that he would remain steadfast in his decision to close the libraries, vowing to appeal the court ruling that forced him to keep them open. Now, in no small part due to the determined and creative action of the Coalition to Save the Libraries, we have a budget that keeps all library branches open. The Mayor wanted to shut down 68 of the city's 81 pools, where kids cool off in the hot summer months. Now that number has now been drastically reduced, with 46 remaining open. No health center will be closed. No more fire stations, engines or ladder companies will be closed. So can we now declare, "Victory is ours!" Hardly.

We must celebrate and acknowledge that we have power, that our efforts as

regular Philadelphians from all sorts of backgrounds were able to fight back - and stop - serious attacks on our communities. With the announcement of the new budget, however, we must now survey the battlefield from a new vantage point. With open eyes we must understand where services have been decreased and where the Nutter administration's attacks lie in the future. We can say one thing for certain: this budget war has spared certain interests in Philadelphia. The wealthy, out of state real estate developers, large corporations and the rich in general have all been given a pass. While we have won much, Nutter still plans to balance the budget on the backs of working people, albeit with a different approach. He will institute taxes that hit the pockets of the poor more than the Rittenhouse Square crowd. He is ready to wage a war against the unions and take money out of the pockets of hardworking Philly city workers, which will dramatically lower the standard for traditionally well-paying city jobs and jobs in the private sector alike. Instead of continuing on his crusade to severely cut city services, he will now cut the wages, benefits and working conditions of the very people who provide those services.

Memory Against Forgetting: We Still Have Cuts to Struggle Against

While we were successful in fighting back most cuts, we didn't win on all fronts. The libraries are still understaffed from layoffs that occurred January 1st and the policy change that required minimum 4 staff people to keep a branch library open. We foresee rolling closures of branch libraries even

though they are 'open'. We've braved the winter, but a policy is still in effect which does not require the city to plow many streets after a snow storm unless there is a foot of snow. (Full disclosure: one of the authors of this article almost crashed his car because a street wasn't adequately plowed.) While 46 pools will remain open, many kids will not go to other neighborhoods to swim, because of neighborhood rivalries, the long walk and the possibility of getting in a scuffle.

Notably, while the Health Centers will remain open, they will now be charging a sliding scale fee for basic health care and prescriptions. Additionally, they will be charging for over-the-counter medications. This will hit the senior who has to make a choice about whether to eat or get medicine and the poor person who is HIV-positive and desperately needs treatment to stay healthy. In short, the new policy will hurt the city's most vulnerable.

It goes without saying: we must fight to restore our services to their previous level.

Nutter Says Tax The Poor!

When Mayor Nutter first announced his budget cuts back in November, he said there weren't going to be broad, across-the-board cuts to every city department. He claimed cuts would be done with a scalpel, not an axe.

Apparently he doesn't feel that way about taxes. The city needs revenue and Mayor Nutter's budget calls for new taxes to fill the gaps. It's worth mentioning where the taxes won't be coming from. Will he get rid of the ten-year tax abatement that mainly benefits out of state developers, wealthy condo owners and large corporations? No. Will he institute progressive wage and business taxes that would require companies and individuals who make over 250,000 a year to pay more? Nope. And hey, what about getting gigantic "non-profits" like the University of Pennsylvania and Jefferson University Hospital who DO NOT pay property taxes to kick down more Payment in Lieu of Tax (PiLoT) money for the city services they receive? Forget about it.

Nutter's got a different tax plan: one that uses a broad axe and not a scalpel. It's an axe that'll hit the poor hard and leave the rich with little more than a scrape. He'll ask the state to allow the city to increase sales tax by 1%. Sales taxes are generally—as economists say—regressive. This means that someone who makes very little money pays a higher percentage of their income in

continued on page 16...

A Brawl in the Balcony:



In the meantime, while City Council attempted to bore dozens of us into comas as we waited patiently to be bored by Mayor Nutter's own boring lecture on the budget, most of us had wild hopes that something out of the ordinary might happen. Instead, we were reminded once again of some of the indignities that have come to be accepted as normal.

When the Frankford Chargers football team was being honored by City Council National People's Democratic Uhuru Movement activists brought attention to the team member who wasn't there, stating in clear calm words: "We remember Shareef Lee Jones, killed by Philadelphia police."

Shareef Jones, who played on the Frankford Chargers was shot last August. The ex-cop accused Shareef of trying to rob him while delivering pizza and gunned him down. When police responded, instead of driving Shareef to the hospital, they drove his bullet riddled body around in circles before dropping his dead body off to the hospital.

Civil Affairs (our well dressed political police), made an initial attempt to politely shut up the protesters, but was met with near panic when someone in the balcony noticed they had come heavily armed screaming: "They've got a gun!" and scrambling for safety. Obviously confused when confronted with the obvious, the officer left the scene, only to return with possibly the entire (now less polite) Civil Affairs crew. This time, orders were for the Uhuru members to sit down immediately or be removed. In response the entire balcony stood up with them. Within seconds, a Civil Affairs cop, had his fingers around Uhuru organizer Diop Oluigbala's neck, fists flew liberally and cops recklessly shoved and beat their way through the crowd. Several elderly protesters in the crowd were injured by police, one of whom went to the hospital with a broken hip. Both Diop and Shabaka Mnombatha, also with Uhuru were arrested and charged with aggravated assault, obstructing justice and resisting arrest. All three charges are typical fare when being charged as a victim of police violence.

It certainly wasn't the first time Philly cops brutalized someone while protesting the brutality of Philadelphia police, but I cringed when I heard Nutter name the Philly PD as being among the few to come out of the massive ongoing corporate looting unscathed. Like the greedy elites and corporations that police protect, somehow it's the police that manage to get awarded and protected every time they ruin someone's life. This year alone, Philly cops have already killed at least nine, and if we can use history as a guide, they will continue to get away with murder.



Mistreatment of Youth:

Criminalization U.S.- Style

by Bronwyn Lepore

In February (2009) two Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania judges, Mark A. Ci-aravella Jr. and Michael T. Conahan, were convicted of receiving kickbacks to the tune of 2.6 million dollars from the privately run juvenile detention centers ironically named PA Child Care LLC and Western PA Child Care LLC, for sentencing over 5, 000 kids (who typically lacked legal representation) to jail since 2003, for infractions as minor as stealing loose change from cars, writing prank notes and possessing drug paraphernalia. Corporate prison officials have yet to be charged. The news was shocking, but to those familiar with the U.S. prison industry, hardly surprising. The tracking of black, Latino¹ and poor white kids into the prison system has been gaining momentum in the U.S. for some time.²

Henry A. Giroux's recent essay "Disposable Youth in a Suspect Society: A challenge for the Obama administration"³ describes how "the popular demonization of the young now justifies responses to youth that were unthinkable 20 years ago, including criminalization and imprisonment, the prescription of psychotropic drugs [a new children's mental "disorder" is identified as "Failure to Obey"], psychiatric confinement, and zero tolerance policies that model schools after prisons. School has become a model for a punishing society in which children who violate a rule as minor as a dress code infraction or act out slightly in class can be handcuffed, booked and put in a jail cell." One of Project Censored's top 25 censored stories of 2008 "Cruelty and Death in Juvenile Detention Centers," highlighted an underreported 2007 AP study investigating the "number of deaths as well as the allegations and confirmed cases of physical, sexual and emotional abuse by [prison] staff members since January 1, 2004." From a total population [2007] of 46,000 youth detention center detainees, an astounding 13,000 claims had been filed. In January of 2006, according to the report, 14-year old Martin Lee Anderson was beaten to death by guards – who were acquitted of manslaughter charges, the court ruling that "reasonable" force was used - at a Florida Boot Camp. Many juvenile detention centers suffer from severe overcrowding or extreme isolation (over 23-hours a day for months straight), lack of educational opportunity, nonexistent mental healthcare or rehab programs, use of excessive force (restraints, beatings, pepper spray) and inappropriate administration of medications.

Pennsylvania alone has more (increasingly privatized and thus for profit) juvenile detention centers than all of Canada. Increased incarceration rates, as the Wilkes-Barre corruption shows, go hand in hand with privatization. Judge Conahan helped shut down a county run juvenile prison in 2002 and helped two corporations secure private contracts worth tens of millions of dollars. And, of course, profit depends on numbers locked up, thus the enticement for immoral judges and industry to criminalize more and



Giving other thugs a bad name: 2 Wilkes-Barre judges busted after locking up kids for cash

more kids. According to an article by Democracy Now's Amy Goodman, one of the juveniles incarcerated by the PA judges, Hillary Transue, received a 3-month jail term for "posting a web site parodying the assistant principal at her school." Another female adolescent, Jamie Quinn, was imprisoned for a year at the age of 14 for smacking another girl (the smack did not leave any marks and the other girl smacked her first). Initially incarcerated at one of the "Child Care" facilities, she was FTO'd (Failure to Obey) after a few weeks and sent to a military-style boot camp called Vision Quest. She was medicated and had to be hospitalized 3 times. In a live interview with Goodman, Quinn described how the experience affected her: she "lost friends, people look at me different" and is "struggling in school." Two separate class action suits have been filed by Philly's JLC (Juvenile Law Center).

Additionally, the U.S. is the only country to allow life sentences for youth.⁴ An excellent and thorough study by the EJI (Equal Justice Initiative – see www.eji.org) "Cruel and Unusual: Sentencing 13- and 14-year-old Children to Die in Prison" concludes that "condemning young children to die in prison is cruel and incompatible with fundamental standards of decency that require protection for children. These sentences undermine the efforts of parents, teachers, lawyers, activists, legislators, policymakers, judges, child advocates, clergy, students, and ordinary citizens to ensure the well-being of young children in our society and they feed the despair and violence that traumatizes too many of our commu-

nities and young people." The report cites numerous case studies of kids such as Ian Manuel (now 29) who was "sentenced to die in prison for a non-homicide that occurred when he was 13... he has spent half his life in a closet-size concrete box, getting his food through a slot in the door."

Youth advocates such as Giroux and Mike Males, who authored *The Scapegoat Generation: America's War on Adolescents* (1996) and *Kids and Guns: How Politicians, Experts, and the Press Fabricate Fear of Youth* (2001) (the entire book can be read/downloaded from Males' homepage) highlight how mainstream media plays a supporting role in criminalization by demonizing youth. "In spite of the fact that crime continues to decline in the United States," writes Giroux, "the popular media still represents young people as violent and threatening." The triad of corporate media, a corporate prison industry, and a government and politicians willing to sacrifice young people for profit has created a nasty cycle of repression, that only powerful advocacy and social movements can address. Learn more! Get involved!

All of the talk about a post-racial society in light of Obama's election is meaningless as long as young people of color are disproportionately criminalized at younger and younger ages, allowed to disappear in the growing ranks of the criminal justice system and increasingly viewed as a racial threat to society rather than as a crucial social, political and economic investment. Obama's message of hope and responsibility seems empty unless he addresses the plight of poor white youth and youth of color and the growing youth industrial complex.

-Giroux, "Locked Out and Locked Up: Youth Missing in Action From Obama's Stimulus Plan (17 February 2009 truthout)

1. According to a study by the CDF (Children's Defense Fund) "A black boy born in 2001 has a 1 in 3 chance of going to prison in his lifetime; A Latino boy has a 1 in 6 chance."

2. See Christian Parenti's *Lockdown America for a good overview of the rise of today's PIC (Prison Industrial Complex).*

3. Giroux, a long-time youth advocate is professor of English and Cultural Studies, and author of numerous books, including *The Abandoned Generation: Democracy beyond the culture of fear* (2003) and the upcoming *Youth in a Scapegoat Society: Democracy or Disposability* (2009).

4. See Rob X Holbrook's reflections on his incarceration as a youth in *defenestrator* issue 39, pg. 8 *Reflections Back to a Long Hot Summer.*

music review:

"Fear is the mind killer, fear is the little death that brings total obliteration"

From the first line of the first track (a quote from dune) we see the thesis clearly: escape the mental prison! With styles reminiscent of Saul Williams or even Gil Scott Heron, veteran west Philly activist, DJ, and Poet brings his first collection of work "Infinite Tenacity" to us with the help of producer Tremain Fisher. whose eclectic styles help frame the diverse yet vibrant visions of Mshinda.

Mshinda, who many of you probably know from events like Poems not Prisons at the A-space or the bi-monthly open mic at Queen of Sheba (succinctly titled "Inspiration"). The album covers a lot of ground - it is as diverse as life itself - one of the primary focal points however is social justice, specifically issues surrounding the prison industrial complex. This shadows Mshinda's own personal struggles from the shackles of this very injustice system. One of my favorite tracks, "Red Pill" was partially written during an impromptu studio session at my house when Mshinda had just gotten released from State custody. Other tracks such as "Cough Syrup" and "County Blues" expose the hypocrisy of the prison system, showing that it is incapable of reforming criminal mentality but actually has a hardening effect on many detainees and drives them to further acts of illegal behavior. "406", one of the strongest tracks, features an amazing performance by Alex Smith on the second verse (who coincidentally introduced Mshinda to Tremain). The number refers to the amount of confirmed homicides during 2006, when the piece was recorded. This obscene murder rate was just a prominent symptom in an otherwise diseased Philadelphian social landscape. It firmly illustrates the desperate need for drastic change in the local and national policies of Law enforcement, especially in the urban residential community. As if all that wasn't enough, Mshinda brings the effort home with track 13, featuring the renowned slam poet and former Poems not Prisons organizer Walidah Imarisha in a sobering look at domestic violence, an issue too often ignored. All in all, this is a well put together package, even featuring cover art done by Mshinda himself. A definite crowd pleaser...

Available directly from Mshinda @ www.myspace.com/mshinda

Seedless.bbv@gmail.com
www.myspace.com/wujo44



Women's Self-Help Group Challenges DHS in honor of International Women's Day

By Amy Dalton

On Friday March 6, several dozen mothers, grandmothers, children, and their supporters gathered in front of the Department of Human Services (DHS) office in downtown Philadelphia to challenge the agency's priorities and practices. The women say the DHS has a pattern of mistaking poverty for neglect, and trauma caused by domestic violence as evidence of poor mothering. Several spoke at length about their experience trying to get their children back from the state foster care system, or encountering abuse, neglect and racism within what are supposed to be solutions. The group then marched down the street to the Arch Street United Methodist Church, where a teach-in was held.

Facing the Man Together

"No one should have to go meet the man alone," said community organizer Phoebe Jones. Coordinated by the Every Mother is a Working Mother Network (EMWMN), the "DHS, Give Us Back Our Children" group is run on a mutual aid, self-help basis. Anyone can come, share their story and obtain the advice and aid of their peers. Each person also is expected to donate their time to advising others. Participants keep tabs on each case, accompany each other to hearings and meetings, and plan together on how to change the system.

Jones says that their group has helped to reunite four women with their children, and prevented the separation of families while many cases are still being fought. No paid staff are involved in the project, though some of the women used to be social workers themselves.

One mother and support group member, who recently won a precedent-setting case involving the privacy rights of domestic violence victims, explained how when going to the hospital after she was abused by her husband, she was told that Child Protective Services was a group that would "protect her children." Based on this, she gladly agreed that they should be involved. But she now says this was the biggest mistake of her life as she then had to

fight the state as well as her husband. She also had to fight being forced to take prescription drugs that go against her convictions.

Support group members say money



should be redirected toward supporting children's and mothers' immediate monetary needs within the existing family structure, rather than spent on a bureaucracy that too often does harm in the name of help. It is estimated that DHS spends \$34,000 a year per child. "What a mother could do with that money!" says Pamela Timmons, whose daughter was taken when she asked DHS for help.

The tragic effects of providing help in a misguided manner spread to many parts of life. Jeanne Schmolze, a former social worker who has also worked in the mental health and substance abuse services field, spoke about how poor

women often experience a lose-lose decision between whether or not to pursue the assistance they need from the state, knowing that it could put them in danger of having their kids placed in DHS care. "Mothers would

the myth of the "welfare queen," which underlines people's stereotypes that mothers — and especially women of color — who don't have paid jobs do nothing.

"When you disrespect the work of caregiving, you disrespect the people being cared for, as well as for those doing the work," said Pat Albright. "Nothing is more important than the care of people and we want our society to represent this." She said that the whole premise of welfare reform — forcing the poorest women to take on no-pay or low-pay jobs — should be opposed, not just time limits and sanctions. "Now is our chance to put it all on the table," she said. "You don't know what you can accomplish unless you try."

Tim Kearney, the former legislative aid for Philadelphia Councilman David Cohen, concurred. "We should never let anyone tell us that there isn't enough money to take care of every one of our children as many ways as is necessary," he said. He went on to draw connections between the supposed lack of money for mothers and children, and decisions to spend millions of dollars on sports stadiums and wars. "The Philadelphia taxpayers pay 30 million dollars a year on debt to finance our stadiums!" he said. "That means as taxpayers we're paying twice. Our governments have so much money, but we the people don't demand it!"

The event was co-sponsored by the Global Women's Strike, which marks its ten year anniversary this year. Also in attendance were members of the Payday Men's Network and the Philadelphia Childcare Collective, who provided support. Anita Colon of Fight for Lifers also spoke, drawing connections between the lack of support for mothers and children, and the monetary incentives toward longer prison sentences, even life sentences, for juveniles. In the aftermath of the exposure of corruption in the sentencing of minors in Luzerne County PA, Fight for Lifers is ratcheting up its organizing against the prison industrial complex, and encouraged people to save the date for a protest at SCI Camp Hill, PA some time this summer.

rather deal with an addiction than risk having their children taken from them," she said. The statement was met with enraged cries of "shame!" at a system that would create such a trap.

Welfare Reform — Or: "How We Got Into this Mess"

The EMWM Network evolved out of the fight to oppose welfare reform which ended welfare as a right for the work of raising children. EMWM perceived that this was possible because people did not respect the work that the women did — birthing and raising children. Out of this disrespect grows

We Can Live Without Capitalism

A plan of action to profoundly free ourselves from the current system

Translators Introduction

On September 17, 2008, as the governments of the world scrambled to prevent the collapse of the global financial system, Enric Duran, a Catalan anticapitalist organizer, announced a daring act of 'financial civil disobedience.' Over the past two years Duran had borrowed 492,000 euros (approx 664000 US) from 40 different banks with no intention of paying the money back. As a protest of the global financial system and the inherently exploitative nature of commercial banks, Duran distributed the money to various anticapitalist social movements in Spain and used it to publish 200,000 copies of a magazine called *Crisis* that detailed critiques of the commercial banking system. He was dubbed 'Robin Hood of the Banks' by the media.

Duran left the country to avoid prosecution and began a campaign to organize debtors and bank depositors with with the Barcelona-based *Crisis Collective*. On March 16, 2009 Duran returned to Barcelona to announce a second publication at a press conference. The publication, *Podem* (Catalan for "We Can"), outlines ways to begin to organize a post-capitalist society. 350,000 copies of the magazine, created and edited by hundreds of volunteers, were distributed for free across Spain. On March 17th, Duran was arrested for fraud at the University of Barcelona. Supporters of Duran held a demonstration for his release on at the Barcelona police station on March 18th. (Check <http://17-s.info> for legal updates.)

'We Can Live Without Capitalism' is the central piece of *Podem*, outlining a popular response to make the rich pay for the financial crisis. It calls for people to organize alternatives to capitalism by removing deposits from banks, ceasing payments of debts and mortgages, and developing self-managed institutions to meet peoples needs.

We're rebelling against the old world and declaring the civilization of unused private property a shipwreck. We're announcing the beginning of a new era of the right to use, of an economy of common goods and resources. On September 17th, 2009, after a few months of transition, we will begin to live without capitalism.

Following the arguments detailed in the articles on page 4 and 5, we proceed in these central pages to detail how we're going to put into practice--not just into words--a way of living that constructs of a new model of society. Before going into more details, we'll start with the current social situation.

The context for how we're mobilizing

Thinking about how to mobilize before this crisis, in an unfavorable situation for so many people and small business, many people look towards the unions, waiting for the magic words. And the only means of pressuring the government for the benefit of common people is the general strike. But after thinking about the unions, we have to focus on what is currently happening to the labor force, as well as what is happening to other social institutions and the means of communications. For example:

- The number of workers working for large companies or in industry has dropped compared to those in the service sector or those that have left for other countries. When we imagine a workplace with think more of an office and less of a factory.
- Long-term contracts have been declining. There is more mobility between businesses, more temporary work, and more workers who chose to be self-employed.
- The leadership of the large unions have integrated themselves in the power structure in such a way that they only mobilize when workers are vocal and doing nothing would make them loose credibility. And then they only mobilize for very concrete demands.

• Given that we're seeking actions that have a real force, we consider the general strike a means of applying consistent pressure on the economy of a country, not simply not going to work. For that reason, it doesn't really matter if workers at large companies go to work if the supply lines are blocked and their suppliers can't bring them materials. The Argentine piqueteros understand this perfectly; with a social base of unemployed workers they have learned how to cut off the city of Buenos Aires with road blockades.

In the Spanish state there are 22 million economically active people, of which a little over 3 million are unemployed (and rising daily), a little over 3 million are self-employed and 11 million are on indefinite work terms. The other 5 million are divided between businesses owners, cooperative workers, and temporary workers. (Forgive the reference to the state, it's only to express the information in relation to other areas).

It's important to keep in mind that currently there are many other groups that can mobilize aside from employed workers. If a general strike is organized with the objective of truly making the rich pay for the crisis, then maybe a lot of people can be mobilized. Given the circumstances, we believe that it's totally possible to call a powerful general strike without the large unions if it's organized at the right time and if we believe in it ourselves. Having said this, thinking in the context of systemic crisis, a general strike isn't sufficient. The main task is to bring about a new way of living that takes capitalism out of our lives so that little by little it can leave the life of everyone.

So if a general strike is called by the militant unions and social movements, we'll support it. But from this publication we make a call to go beyond that.

Continuing with the Plan of Action

This proposal has been developed over the past weeks out of an open debate online at



<http://www.17-s.info> - it was reaffirmed at a meeting at Perpignan. First of all, we declare that this proposal is based in a sense of joy and in active non-violence. This is a proposal—directed at the whole of society—to reconsider the way things work, seeking its highest expression of creativity, solidarity, and mutual cooperation.

A huge act of social transformation in a moment like this one needs to be representative so that everyone can not only be part of the process, but identify with it. At the same time, its achievement has to signify a vast change in relationships of power and create coherent alternatives, such as 'de-growth' (1) and self-management, that can be defended as they become more collective.

These ideas are part of the call 'We can live without capitalism,' with which we seek to initiate the process of creating new forms of post-capitalist social organization. To

continue with the distinct arguments and elements of the call:

The fact that banks have created too much money without a base in the real economy is a direct cause of the crisis. When people can't pay the money back, it's demonstrated that this money doesn't exist. Following this, the reaction of the banks has been 1) to quit making credit available, making a lot of money disappear and making it impossible to return the money and 2) asking for (and receiving) a lot of money in order to balance the books. But this hasn't worked to make the credit markets provide money for people—the ones who really need it to live. Meanwhile, thousands of people are unemployed, since businesses no longer produce as much and the majority can't pay their debts because there isn't money to do it with.

This sinking of capitalism is marked by multiple crises—in energy, of the environ-

ment, of the distribution of wealth, of values--that demonstrate that the system is in crisis and that it isn't a good idea—or even a viable one—to prop it back up. .

The pie hasn't been able to keep growing; the enrichment of a wealthy minority and the dignified life of the majority are no longer compatible. In other words, without growth capitalism's economic recovery is incompatible with our quality of life and the health of the environment.

States insist of perpetuating this unrealistic model of perpetual growth to the point that they have clearly broken the last pretense of protecting 'the common good'--the place where their power theoretically comes from. For this reason, the participants in this call revoke the deposit of sovereignty we've made as their subject. From here on we'll begin to exercise our sovereignty in a direct way, following our own principles.

Many people are convinced that an alternative way of running society could function much better than the current system, one based in popular self-management, the right of use, and an economy of common resources and common goods. To bring this into practice we've gone so far as to declare invalid any private property that's unused, abandoned, or in danger of demolition as long as there is someone who needs it.

Before arriving at this point - so that it can't be said that we haven't tried to convince the government to initiate a transition to another model - we'll make a concrete demand, one of the most important ones that will have to be met in order to construct an economy that doesn't need to grow:

We must take the power to create money from nothing away from the banks. Loans should only be a tool to aid in production when necessary, and they should be interest-free. In order to do this, all banks should become property of the people by means of permanent nationalization.

We give the governments of the world the deadline of June 30th, 2009 to present a plan of post-capitalist transition that includes these methods. If this doesn't happen, we will permanently revoke the deposit of popular sovereignty given to states and begin the transition from the below—without counting on the governments. Since we understand that governments almost certainly won't respond, we're putting in the necessary work to make the following calendar of action a reality. We encourage you to participate!

You'll find a list of preliminary actions we've proposed from here to until September listed on the side. From September 17th, 2009, under the banner 'We Can Live Without Capitalism' thousands of people and groups will take the first steps that will signify a massive desertion of the system's institutions and initiate a new post-capitalist era in our lives.

High Hopes for Low Power

Expanding Community Radio in 2009

by Andalusia Knoll

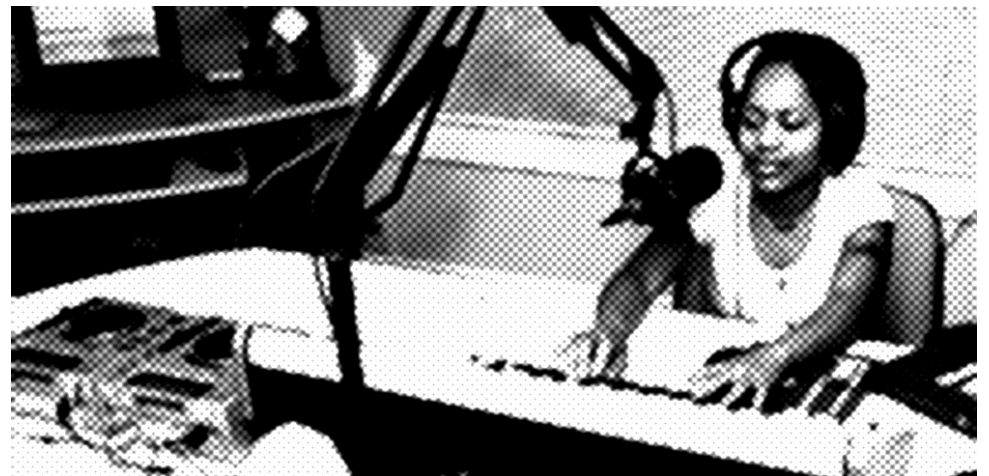
When you tune in the radio dial across this country you will rarely find news that matches the issues and opinions of this here newspaper. And why is that? Is it because there aren't enough people reporting on grassroots issues and social justice struggles or is it because the the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and powerful media conglomerates have made it extremely difficult for educational institutions, labor unions, religious groups, and community organizations to have their own radio stations? Restrictive laws that do not allow Low Power FM (LPFM) radio stations to acquire broadcast licenses show that it is the latter. Our public airwaves have essentially been privatized by large corporations that don't allow diverse programming on the airwaves. However, there is hope! The Local Community Radio Act (HR 1174), if passed by Congress, should ease these restrictions and allow for hundreds of new non-commercial stations.

Currently there are over 800 Low Power FM radio stations across the U.S. These stations have opened the airwaves to a wide range of music, news, community dialogues and much needed local programming. KOCZ is a Low Power FM radio station in Opelousas, Louisiana that serves as an outlet for zydeco music and community news. KOCZ Director John Freeman believes that accessible media is a vital aspect of democracy and adds, "It's important to have low power stations across this country. It supports our democracy. If we don't have an ability to communicate with our community, we really don't have much to offer to our democracy in the United States."

Freeman also believes that Low Power FM stations have the power to impact the larger broadcast of corporate stations. While Opelousas, Louisiana is considered the birthplace of zydeco music, for a long time there was no radio station dedicated to broadcasting this popular fusion of Cajun and Creole Music. When KOCZ started giving zydeco music lots of airplay they received tons of positive feedback. Some of the corporate radio stations in the area followed suit and also started broadcasting zydeco music.

In Immokalee, Florida, the LPFM station Radio Conciencia broadcasts not only the music popular among the immigrant farmworkers who reside in the region, but also news in Spanish, Creole and various indigenous Guatemalan languages including M'am, and Q'anjob'al. The Prometheus Radio Project, a Philadelphia based organization dedicated to expanding LPFM and community media, helped farmworkers who were organized with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) to start Radio Conciencia in 2003. According to radio host Romeo Ramirez, their radio has played a central role in the Coalition's fight to end abuses at work and also against corporate fast food giants' unwillingness to pay more than slave wages to the farmworkers who grow their tomatoes.

Ramirez adds, "It is a platform where we can transmit the voice of the people. Media to communicate what the reality is. Media that gives people the opportunity to develop and transmit messages about human rights



and the basic rights of the immigrant community. It allows us to talk about abuses at work and discrimination."

Radio Conciencia has also played an important role in times of crisis. When Hurricane Wilma hit South Florida in 2005, few radio stations broadcast warnings geared towards farmworkers, who were both linguistically and physically isolated. In a testimony before a FCC Media Ownership Hearing, Gerardo Reyes Chavez, a farmworker and member of the CIW, said that "Radio Conciencia was the only radio that was transmitting information on where to go and what to do, in Spanish and in the indigenous languages spoken in our community... When people were confused about what was happening they were able to contact us at the radio station to find out the current situation, the imperative of evacuating trailers, and where to find shelter." Low Power FM also played a vital role during Hurricane Katrina where stations like KOCZ 103.7 FM in Opelousas, Louisiana and WQRZ 103.5 FM in Hancock County, Mississippi were the only ones broadcasting in their respective areas in the days following the storm.

Clear Channel, the media conglomerate that owns more than 1,100 AM, FM and shortwave radio stations has come under sharp criticism for their media outlets' lack of response in times of crisis. When a train derailed in Minot, North Dakota, leaking thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals into the air, none of the city's six non-religious commercial radio stations aired warnings for local residents. All of Clear Channel's stations were running syndicated programming on autopilot, a form of broadcast that has become all too common with increasing media consolidation. Due to Clear Channel's failure to air crucial warnings, one person died and hundreds were treated for immediate health problems.

Attempting to counter the Clear Channel style of corporatization and homogenization of radio, a broad coalition of media activists, musicians, religious groups and community organizations lobbied the FCC in 2000 to expand the radio dial. The FCC agreed to create a new radio service known as Low Power FM Radio and also to open up "third adjacent" channels for these kinds of stations. This means that if a station currently exists at 89.1 FM the next available Low Power radio station would be 89.7 FM. With current restrictions a station would not be available till the fourth adjacent channel, which is 89.9. According to Kate Blofson, an organizer with the Prometheus Radio Project, this new window for community

radio was immediately closed since "the National Association of Broadcasters and NPR began lobbying congress to limit LPFM because of interference concerns. What that resulted in was Congress passing a law limiting LPFM very significantly. Over 60% of applications were thrown out including any possibilities of LPFM in major urban markets."

In order to convince Congress to disallow 3rd adjacent radio stations, the National Association of Broadcasters distributed a compact disc of this alleged interference. It was later discovered that this misleading CD was produced by artificially mixing two previously recorded radio signals and was not a demonstration of actual interference between two FM radio stations. Further debunking this interference claim, the MITRE STUDY, a multi-million dollar tax-payer funded study released in 2003, showed that no interference should be expected.

However, LPFM's opponents still use this argument as a means of preventing licensing of more channels on the dial for new radio stations. Russ Withers, spokesperson for the National Association of Broadcasters, appeared before the Senate Commerce Committee to express his concerns over the creation of new LPFM stations and said, "LPFM stations exist today within 3rd adjacent protection for a reason – to guard against interference to both LPFMs and full power stations."

Northern Minnesota's Boundary Waters Radio Station is one of many LPFM initiatives prevented from going on the air because of the lack of licenses for open frequencies. Mary Cich of Boundary Waters Radio says they currently broadcast on the Internet because, "The current restrictions make it absolutely impossible for us to broadcast to our town of Ely, Minnesota. We have collected 1,000 signatures of people who say that they want us to get a license. We are in a town of 3,700 people so 1,000 is a large number."

With wide congressional support, the Local Community Radio Act is set to clear this obstacle. Mike Doyle, congressman representing Western Pennsylvania, is one of the co-introducers of this piece of legislation. Doyle believes that The Local Community Radio Act "has the potential to revolutionize and improve what Americans hear on their radio." If it passes, the airwaves in many major cities and small towns in the United States will be opened up to hundreds or even thousands of new community-based Low Power FM Radio stations.



The Other Inauguration Celebration

[col. writ. 3/9/09] (c) '09 Mumia Abu-Jamal

For millions of people, both in America and abroad, the inauguration of a Black person as President of the United States was a moment of transcendent history, one of meaning and significance that suggests real change in a nation that has long labored under its racist history.

This was perhaps best evidenced by the vast number of people who swarmed Washington to be part of such a day.

But for half a dozen men in Pennsylvania's Camp Hill prison, in its SMU (Special Management Unit), the day will be remembered quite differently.

For that day marked a fit of beatings, electric stun gun (and shield) shocking, kicking, punching and other such treatment, accompanied by a rash of racist slurs by white guards against Black prisoners.

According to the Pittsburgh based Human Right Coalition (HRC), guards and staff launched an attack timed to the inauguration, to send the message, "F--k a historical

day, y'all always going to be niggers!"

In an extensive 6 page report sent to members of the press, the HRC's Fed Up! chapter documents assaults and threats



against 6 men that day: David Smith, Gary Tucker, Damont Hagan, Ronald Jackson, Willie Robinson and Jamar Perry. Some of

these men were threatened with death for daring to file suits in courts against their treatment in the unit.

On the morning of the inauguration, one

high-ranking guard reportedly announced over the PA system: "He (speaking of Obama), may have won, in my eyes he's

still a nigger." He also stated: "There will be no showers or yard today. We are going to show you niggers who runs this SMU." *

Men were handcuffed, sprayed with hot pepper mace in the face, blinded, stripped naked and beaten in retaliation for exercising their alleged constitutional right to file a civil rights suit in an American court, on the very day that Barack H. Obama was taking the oath of office, telling the assembled throng before him and the nation and world viewing it remotely, that "we do not torture."

For more information contact:

HRC/Fed Up!
5125 Penn Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15224
hrcfedup@gmail.com
(412) 361.3022, ext. 4

--(c) '09 maj

For an in depth breakdown of the beatings see the Human Rights Coalition call for action online at defenestrator.org/sci_camp_hill_alert

A Plea to the Populace

Keefe Commisary and the Department of Corruption

by Sehu-Kessa-Saa Tabansi

We the incarcerated citizens of Pennsylvania desire the public's scrutiny and intervention into the degree of collaboration between the state of Pennsylvania and the National conglomerate Keefe group.

At present, under the subordinate agency Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) there is a hidden contract with Keefe group. This contract does not benefit Pennsylvania taxpayers or local businesses.

What is known is that Keefe group has a monopoly over Pennsylvania Department of Corrections institutions commissary.

No Pennsylvania businesses have been able to do business with the Pennsylvania DOC because Keefe Group has been the sole beneficiary of that no-bid contract.

The incarcerated citizens of Pennsylvania believe that PA taxpayers and local businesses have an interest in the capital being pulled out of PA's economy and distributed to Keefe.

Keefe is not only making record profits but it is price gouging during times of an economic crisis which is directly affecting Pennsylvania families that are supporting incarcerated citizens as well as local businesses that are suffering in sales.

Revenue going to Keefe group does not benefit the people of Pennsylvania, since Keefe distributes its products from St. Louis Missouri.

(We) incarcerated citizens of Pennsylvania believe that the DOC should make this process more transparent. The public and the prisoners should have free access to the 338 pages of the Keefe contract in public and prison libraries as public information.

Currently the PA DOC charges a \$15.00 search and retrieval fee for the contract which sits in a cabinet with an additional fee of one dollar for the first page and 25 cents per additional page.

It is unknown how much income Keefe has generated through its state and federal

enterprises.

One common ground that transcends the divide between prisoners and the public is the fact that absolute power corrupts absolutely. It appears that elected officials in PA that represent all citizens free and incarcerated have not made transparent whether these elected officials have personally profited from this contract with Keefe.

At the center of this issue is plain and simple old capitalist exploitation through price gouging against an incarcerated class of citizens at a rate that far surpasses the sale price of these products to the general public. We submit this plea to the masses to show solidarity in crippling this corporate extortion by complaints, grievances, phone calls, faxes and emails to:

1. PA governor's office. (Edward G Rendell 225 capitol building Harrisburg PA 17129)
2. PA legislators' offices
3. PA attorney general's offices (Thomas Corbett - strawberry sq. #16 harrisburgh PA 17120--0001)

To confront Keefe group directly,

Keefe Group
10880 Lin Page Place
St. Louis Missouri, 63132

phone 1800 848 5545 or online at www.keefegroup.com

We especially solicit the support of journalists to seek out the Keefe group contract and quarterly earnings as well as assistance from students, legal aides / paralegals and peoples' attorneys.

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The Angola Three: Guilty of Practicing “Black Pantherism”

Cruel and unusual punishment at a modern-day slave plantation

By Hans Bennett

“My soul cries from all that I witnessed and endured. It does more than cry, it mourns continuously,” said Black Panther Robert Hillary King, following his release from the infamous Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola in 2001, after serving his last 29 years in continuous solitary confinement. King argues that slavery persists in Angola and other US prisons, citing the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution, which legalizes slavery in prisons as “a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” King says: “You can be legally incarcerated but morally innocent.”

Since his release, King has fought tirelessly for the freedom of his imprisoned comrades Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace, who are the two co-founders of the Angola chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP)—the only official prison chapter of the BPP. They have now spent over 36 years in solitary confinement. Together, they are known as the Angola Three, a trio of BPP political prisoners whose supporters include Amnesty International, Desmond Tutu, Congressman John Conyers, and the ACLU. Kgalema Mothlante, the President of South Africa, says their case “has the potential of laying bare, exposing the shortcomings, in the entire US system.” King, Woodfox, and Wallace’s federal civil rights lawsuit alleging that their time in solitary confinement is “cruel and unusual punishment,” will soon go to trial in Baton Rouge, at the U.S. Middle District Court.

An 18,000 acre, former slave plantation in rural Louisiana, Angola is the largest prison in the US. Today, with African Americans composing over 75% of Angola’s 5,108 prisoners, prison guards known as “free men,” a forced 40 hour work week, and four cents an hour minimum wage, the resemblance to pre-Civil War US slavery is striking. In the early 1970s, it was even worse, as prisoners were forced to work 96 hour weeks (16 hours a day / 6 days a week) with two cents an hour minimum wage. Officially considered the “Bloodiest Prison in the South” at this time, violence from guards and between prisoners themselves was endemic. Prison authorities sanctioned prisoner rape, and according to former Prison Warden Murray Henderson, the prison guards actually helped facilitate a brutal system of sexual slavery where the younger and physically weaker prisoners were bought and sold into submission. As part of the notorious “inmate trusty guard” system (responsible for killing 40 prisoners and seriously maiming 350 from 1972-75), some prisoners were given state issued weapons and ordered to enforce this sexual slavery, as well as the prison’s many other injustices. Life at Angola was living hell—a 20th century slave plantation.

The Angola Panthers saw life at Angola as modern-day slavery and fought back with non-violent hunger and work strikes. Prison authorities were outraged by the BPP organizing, and overwhelming evidence has since emerged that authorities retaliated by framing these three BPP organizers for murders that they did not commit.

Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace

Both convicted of murder for the April 17, 1972, stabbing death of white prison guard Brent Miller, Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace have recently had major victories in court that may soon lead to their release. In response, Angola Warden Burl Cain

and the Louisiana State Attorney General, James “Buddy” Caldwell, are doing everything they can to resist this, and to keep them in solitary confinement. In sharp contrast, Miller’s widow, Leontine Verrett, now fundamentally questions their guilt. Interviewed in March, 2008, by NBC Nightly News, she called for a new investigation into the case: “What I want is justice. If these two men did not do this, I think they need to be out.”

Woodfox and Wallace were inmates at Angola, resulting from separate robbery convictions, when they co-founded the Angola BPP chapter in 1971.

Woodfox had escaped from New Orleans Parish Prison and fled to New York City, where he met BPP members, including the New York 21 before he was re-captured and sent to Angola. Wallace had met members of the Louisiana State Chapter of the BPP, including the New Orleans 12, while imprisoned at Orleans Parish.

On September 19, 2006, State Judicial Commissioner Rachel Morgan recommended overturning Wallace’s conviction, on grounds that prison officials had withheld information from the jury that showed the prosecution’s key eyewitness was bribed by prison officials in return for his testimony. However, in May, 2008, in a 2-1 vote, the State Appeals Court rejected Morgan’s recommendation and refused to overturn the conviction. Wallace’s appeal is now pending in the State Supreme Court, with a decision expected any month.

On June 10th, 2008, Federal Magistrate Christine Noland recommended overturning Woodfox’s conviction, citing evidence of inadequate representation, prosecutorial misconduct, suppression of exculpatory

evidence, and racial discrimination. Then, on November 25, US District Court Judge James Brady upheld Noland’s recommendation, overturned the conviction, and granted bail. The State of Louisiana responded by appealing to the US Fifth Circuit. In December, the Fifth Circuit denied bail, but ruled to expedite the appeal, and indicated sympathy for the overturning the conviction, writing: “We are not now convinced that the State has established a likelihood of success on the merits.” Oral arguments are now planned for this March, but no date has been set. Woodfox’s lawyers Chris Aberle and Nick Trenticosta were disappointed about the denied bail, but remain optimistic about the upcoming oral arguments. Happy about the bail denial, LA Attorney General Caldwell boasted:

“They don’t need to mess with me, ‘cause I’m not playing.”

Ira Glasser, formerly of the ACLU, criticized Caldwell, writing that following the Oct., 2008 announcement that Woodfox’s niece had agreed to take him in if granted bail, Caldwell “embarked upon a public scare campaign reminiscent of the kind of inflammatory hysteria that once was used to provoke lynch

mobs. He called Woodfox a violent rapist, even though he had never been charged, let alone convicted, of rape; he sent emails to [Woodfox’s niece’s] neighbors calling Woodfox a convicted murderer and violent rapist; and neighbors were urged to sign petitions opposing his release. In the end, his niece and family were sufficiently frightened and threatened that Woodfox rejected the plan to live with them while on bail.” In his Nov. 25 ruling, Judge Brady himself criticized the intimidation campaign: “it is apparent that the [neighborhood] association was not told Mr. Woodfox is frail, sickly, and has a clean conduct record for more than twenty years.”

When the October 27-29 National Public Radio (NPR) series on the case reported directly from Angola, reporter Laura Sullivan seemed shocked by the overt imagery of white supremacy and slavery, observing that “a hundred black men are in the field, bent over picking tomatoes. A single white officer on a horse sits above them, a shotgun in his lap...It’s the same

as it looked 40 years ago, and 100 years ago.” Commenting that many at Angola today “seem to want to bury this case in a place no one will find it,” NPR reported that Warden Burl Cain and others refused to comment. However, Caldwell told NPR he is convinced that Woodfox and Wallace are guilty, and that he will appeal Woodfox’s case all the way to the US Supreme Court. “This is a very dangerous person,” Caldwell says. “This is the most dangerous person on the planet.”

As NPR documented, there is no physical evidence linking Woodfox or Wallace to the murder. A bloody fingerprint was found at the scene but it doesn’t match either one’s prints. Outrageously, prison officials have always refused to test that fingerprint against their own inmate fingerprint database. Caldwell vows to continue this policy, telling NPR: “A fingerprint can come from anywhere... We’re not going to be fooled by that.”

Caldwell also told NPR that he firmly believes the testimony of the prosecution’s key eyewitness, Hezekiah Brown, a serial rapist who’d been sentenced to life without parole. Brown first told prison officials that he didn’t know anything, but he later testified to seeing Miller stabbed to death by four inmates: Woodfox and Wallace, and two others that are now deceased: Chester Jackson (who testified for the state and pled guilty to a lesser charge) and Gilbert Montegut (who was acquitted after an officer provided an alibi).

Pardoned in 1986, and now deceased, Brown always denied receiving special favors from prison authorities in exchange for his testimony. However, numerous prison documents reveal special treatment, including special housing and a carton of cigarettes given to him every week. Testifying at Woodfox’s retrial, former Warden Murray Henderson admitted telling Brown that if he provided testimony helping to “crack the case,” he would reward him by lobbying for his pardon.

Solitary Confinement for “Black Pantherism”

In early 2008, a 25,000 signature petition initiated by ColorOfChange.org calling for an investigation into Woodfox and Wallace’s convictions and solitary confinement, was delivered to Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal by the head of the State Legislature’s Judiciary Committee, Cedric Richmond, but Jindal remains silent.

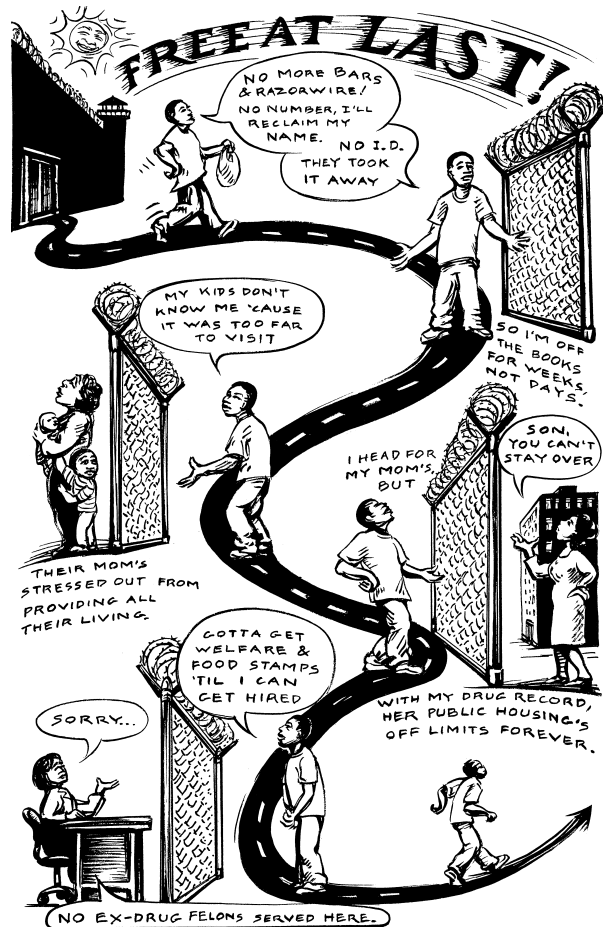
In March, 2008, following a visit from the Chairman of the US House Judiciary Committee John Conyers, Innocence Project founder Barry Scheck, and Cedric Rich-



a recent picture of Herman and Albert together - fighting fit and looking great.

continued on page 14

Abolishing The Prison Industrial Complex and Freeing All Political Prisoners



By Hans Bennett

A Book review of:

The Real Cost of Prisons

edited by Lois Ahrens, PM Press, 2008.

Let Freedom Ring:

A Collection of Documents from the Movements to Free US Political Prisoners

edited by Matt Meyer, PM Press, 2008.

Abolition Now!

Ten Years of Strategy and Struggle Against The Prison Industrial Complex

edited by the CR10 Publications Collective, AK Press, 2008.

2008 marked the ten-year anniversaries of both the prison abolitionist Critical Resistance (CR) conference in Oakland, CA that coined the phrase “prison industrial complex” (PIC) and the National Jericho Movement’s march in Washington DC that demanded the release of all US political prisoners and prisoners of war. To commemorate the 1998 events, the CR10 conference was held in Oakland in September, and Jericho organized a march to the United Nations in October.

These two important events in 1998 successfully re-energized the prison-activist and political prisoner support movements rooted in the 1960s and 1970s. However, while recognizing this accomplishment, three new books document how the prison industrial complex has actually grown bigger and stronger since 1998, while the post-911 climate has further escalated political repression. While recognizing this frustrating reality, these new books look honestly

at both the accomplishments and shortcomings of the last ten years.

The Real Cost of Prisons Comix

The new book *The Real Cost of Prisons Comix*, reprints three comic books published as part of the Real Costs of Prisons Project (RCPP), which began in 2000. So far, 125,000 comic books have been printed, with over 100,000 distributed for free to community groups and college classes alike. Featuring artwork by Kevin Pyle, Sabrina Jones and Susan Willmarth, all three comic books can be freely downloaded at www.realcostofprisons.org.

Prison abolitionists Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Craig Gilmore write in the book’s introduction that the RCPP’s value “has been to show us how the system of mass incarceration permeates our lives, who is paying the costs of that system and the many ways the system is vulnerable to people who put their thought and effort into organizing to shrink it.” Significantly, the RCPP’s comics “demonstrate that the ideas we need to change the world can be explained simply enough and packaged attractively enough to be used by all kinds of readers.” Prisoners and their families can “understand material usually circulated only among academics and those who focus on policy.”

Editor Lois Ahrens writes that “a central goal of the comic books is to politicize, not pathologize.” She argues that the “deregulation and globalization” of the last 30 years has “resulted in impoverishing urban economies, limiting opportunities for meaningful work and slashing funding for quality education, marginalizing the poor, and creating more inequality. The comic books place individual experience in this context and challenge a central message of neo-liberal ideology: the myth that people can pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. In this paradigm, racism, sexism, classism, and economic inequality are not part of the picture. Most people now believe that change happens through personal transformation rather than political struggle and change.”

The recent growth of the PIC and mass incarceration is staggering. Ahrens writes that “every year from 1947 through the beginning of the 1970s, approximately 200,000 people were incarcerated in the US. Today, there are more than 2.3 million men and women incarcerated, with more than 5 million more on parole and probation.”

The *Prison Town* comic book debunks the myth that building a new prison actually helps to revitalize a town with an ailing economy, and instead illustrates the many negative costs that a new prison can impose. Importantly, *Prison Town* also documents how many towns learned by example and cited the prisons’ negative impact in successful campaigns to stop prison construction in their community.

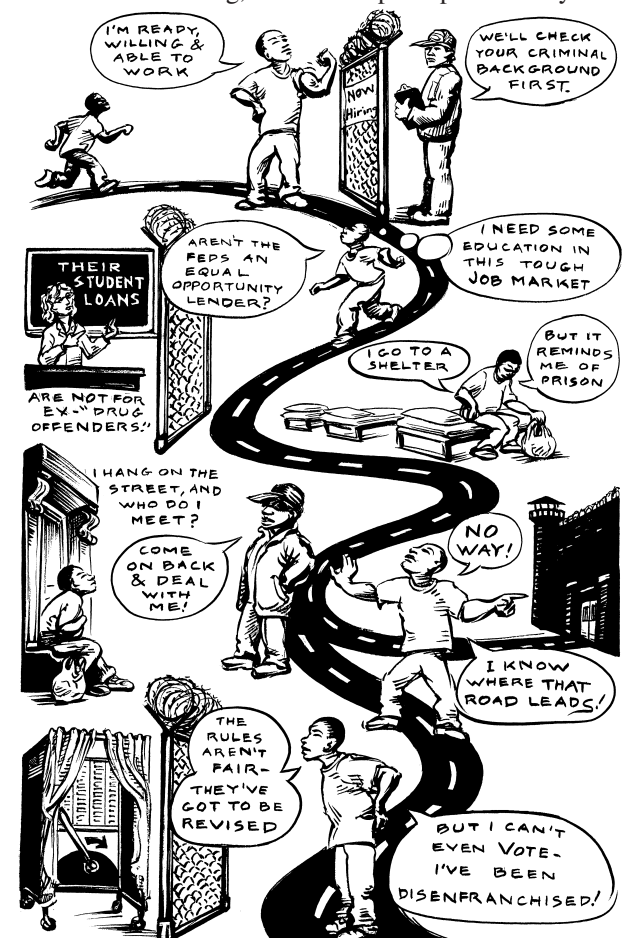
Prisoners of the War on Drugs is a heart-wrenching look at the victims of the so-called “war on drugs.” At least according to its official purpose, the “war on drugs” has been a total failure, resulting in the mass incarceration of non-violent drug offenders at a huge, inefficient expense to tax-payers. Prisoners emphasizes “harm reduction” and treatment as a better solution, stating that the “war on drugs locks up more users than dealers. Most want to quit, but can’t. A year of treatment costs much less than a year of incarceration, plus: “the person can work, pay taxes & take part in family life.” While drug laws may seem in-

sane, they appear to have unofficial motives that are highly rational. For example, they have served to accelerate mass imprisonment, the criminalization of poverty, and the erosion of civil liberties.

Prisoners of a Hard Life: Women & Their Children concludes the three-comic book series. The stories presented here are mostly fictional, but are based on the writers’ research and personal experience working with women prisoners. Therefore, Ahrens explains that the stories “represent the lives of hundreds of thousands of people suffering as a result of the war on drugs.” Perhaps most outrageous is the true story of Regina McKnight, the first woman in the US to be convicted of murder because of behavior while pregnant. When McKnight’s baby was delivered stillborn and an autopsy found traces of cocaine in the fetus, she was arrested and convicted of murder with a 20-year sentence. In 2008, following several appeals and eight years in prison, the South Carolina Supreme Court unanimously reversed her conviction, after concluding that there is no medical evidence of cocaine causing stillbirths.

Let Freedom Ring

Let Freedom Ring: A Collection of Documents from the Movements to Free US Political Prisoners, is an epic 877-page compilation of both pre-existing documents and original articles. Explaining the context of its release, editor Matt Meyer cites the recent persecution of the San Francisco Eight, who are former Black Panther Party (BPP) members being charged with a 30-year old crime. Beginning with the 2006 grand jury, “the state threw down a gauntlet. When it became clear that the investigations were reopening cases based on evidence obtained primarily through torture, the message was unmistakable: Be afraid, be very afraid, and don’t even think of fighting back. When these same men stood strong, firm on the principle that they



Prisoners of the War on Drugs by Sabrina Jones • © 2008 The Real Cost of Prisons Project • www.realcostofprisons.org

would not take part in a new, government sponsored witch-hunt, they sent a counter-message on behalf of us all: we will not allow our communities, our struggles, our communities, our very lives to be criminalized by a corrupt and racist criminal justice system." This spirit of resistance to state repression flows throughout *Let Freedom Ring*.

The book's many sections focus on a wide range of US political prisoners, featuring both facts about their case, and actual writing from the prisoners themselves. One particularly interesting section is titled Resisting Repression: Out and Proud, which includes the classic 1991 interview "Dykes and Fags Want to Know: Interview with Lesbian Political Prisoners," featuring Laura Whitehorn (released in 1999), a well as Linda Evans and Susan Rosenberg, who were both pardoned by President Clinton in 2001. Also notable is a 1991 speech given by former BPP political prisoner Dhoruba Bin-Wahad, who was released after 19 years. Considered a groundbreaking speech from a Black Muslim revolutionary, Bin-Wahad declared that "we can not build a new society if we premise that society on the oppression of other people." Continuing the legacy of BPP co-founder Huey P. Newton, he argued that fighting the oppression of women and GLBTs is inseparable from the fight against capitalism, racism, and all oppression. Also featured is a tribute to the late Kuwasi Balagoon, who died in prison of AIDS-related pneumonia in 1986. In the words of poet Walidah Imarisha, Balagoon "was an anarchist in a Black nationalist movement, he was queer in a straight dominated movement, he was a guerrilla fighter after it was 'chic,' and he...demanded to be seen not as a revolutionary icon, but as a person, beautiful and flawed."

An entire section focuses on death-row journalist, MOVE supporter, and former BPP member Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is currently asking the US Supreme Court to consider his case for a new guilt-phase trial. Abu-Jamal's death sentence was somewhat overturned in 2001 when the US District Court ruled that he needs a new sentencing-phase trial if the DA still wants to execute. The US Third Circuit Court affirmed this 2001 ruling in March, 2008, but Abu-Jamal has still never left his death-row cell, and the Philadelphia DA is appealing this 2001/2008 ruling to US Supreme Court. If the DA wins their appeal, Abu-Jamal could then be executed without a new sentencing-phase trial. A decision from the Court on whether it will consider these two appeals is expected in early 2009.

Abolition Now!

Abolition Now! was published to coincide with the CR10 conference. The introduction explains that Critical Resistance (CR) is not only "struggling to tear down the cages" of the prison industrial complex (PIC), but "also to abolish the actions of policing, surveillance, and imprisonment that give the PIC its power. We are also reminded that abolition is the creation of possibilities for our dreams and demands for health and happiness—for what we want, not what we think we can get."

The book features reflections and constructive

criticism from a variety of CR organizers and activists. For example, Mills College professor Julia Sudbury emphasizes the "need for healing as an abolitionist practice. Many of us come to this work with our own wounds," and while "many of us draw energy and inspiration from these wounds," we are "also drained by these traumas...As a result our movement can be very 'head' oriented—talking, planning, thinking, writing—and not body and emotion oriented." Sudbury concludes that a "movement against a violent and violating phenomenon like the PIC cannot hope to be successful if we don't directly address and heal the effects of that violence."

Former political prisoner Bo Brown argues that the movement should have more "street awareness" and not be limited to "legislative" goals and actions. "You have to do both. I think you can get lost in that and you can stay there and consider yourself a good person and never really get your hands dirty in a human kind of way...I'd like to see us come up with some kind of support group for families with prisoners that's real. We need to figure out how to support the prisoners when they're coming home. We need to understand post-traumatic shock on an ongoing, day-to-day basis."

Andrea Smith, co-founder of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence argues that "the criminalization approach proffered in the mainstream anti-violence movement doesn't work. And, also, this criminalization approach obfuscates the role of the state in perpetrating gender violence. At the same time, we have to deal with the practical concerns for safety for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Thus, we are working on developing community accountability strategies that do not rely on the state, and also do not depend on a romanticized version of 'community'... This intersects with work in indigenous rights movements, which have concepts of indigenous nationhood that are not based on nation-state forms of governance that rule through violence, domination, and control."

Abolition Now! also spotlights examples of organizations putting abolitionist strategy into practice, like with the LEAD Project's group of transition homes for women returning from imprisonment in the Watts District of Los Angeles, called "A New Way of Life." Also, the UBUNTU Coalition in Durham, NC, works at responding to violence without reinforcing the PIC.

Prisons Are Everywhere

Above all, these three highly-recommended books (available online at www.akpress.org) argue that prison-related issues are inseparable from racism, classism, sexism, and all oppression, so the more we know about prisons, the better informed multi-issue activist strategies will be. They conclude that in working to abolish all oppression, we must also work to abolish the PIC and free all political prisoners.

--Hans Bennett is an independent multi-media journalist (www.insubordination.blogspot.com) and co-founder of Journalists for Mumia (www.abu-jamal-news.com).

Supreme Court Refuses to Grant Mumia New Trial

Just a day or so before we go to press, the US Supreme Court announced that they will not give further consideration to Mumia's appeal for a new guilt-phase trial (in legalese, they won't grant his "Petition for a Writ of Certiorari")

However, it also says that the US Supreme Court may still consider the DA's appeal to reinstate the death penalty without a new sentencing hearing!



Though many calls have come and gone in the last years of this struggle, this really needs to be a time to step it up. We should remember that courts and officials will always try to make their law sound like the final verdict, but powerful social movements have more often than not pushed a racist decision on the part of power into retreat. So let's get over empty threats and start organizing your affinity groups to take action now!

Post Supreme Court Interview with Mumia

Transcript of Interview 4-6-09

Noelle Hanrahan Prison Radio: Mumia, what's your reaction?

Mumia Abu-Jamal: Well all I know is, you know, what Christina told me. So there's nothing. There's nothing to read. There is no order, other than my name is on a list of Cert denied.

Noelle Hanrahan: That's right.

Mumia Abu-Jamal: So we don't know anything. And you know, if it is the Batson issue, then it just shows you that precedent means nothing, that the law is politics by other means and that the constitution means nothing. That a fair jury means nothing.

Noelle Hanrahan: You said when I just first talked to you something about that it's another day and how many days?

Mumia Abu-Jamal: Another day? Three decades.

Noelle Hanrahan: When did you stop being surprised?

Mumia Abu-Jamal: When I was at pretrial hearing before Judge Sabo, and he denied the motion. I knew then that he wasn't working with the constitution. It did surprise me, and it really shocked me because, I'd read the cases. I knew what the law was. I knew what the law books said the law was. I learned then that they're not going by that kind of law, and apparently they're not going by that kind of law now. If you read Batson and you read my case then it's almost as if you're in two different universes. And in fact you are. You are.

Noelle Hanrahan: Are there different rules for what type of people?

Mumia Abu-Jamal: Well there's always been different rules for Black people, you know. If you read Batson, what will surprise people who have never done so, it has nothing to do with the accused, the defendant, the person on trial. Batson, in its own terms, says it protects the rights of those people who are allegedly American citizens, who are denied the right to serve as jurors. That's what it says, that's what it says. But in fact, how does it do that when it allows people to be removed, after Batson became law, for spurious reasons? Batson can be bested and beaten by exactly the way the DA's office said it could be beaten: by lying, and by getting up and saying, "Well no, we didn't have any racist reasons, and ah we just ah, we're not..." Listen, listen to the video tape. YOU HAVE SIXTY SECONDS REMAINING Listen to the video tape and if that doesn't tell you all you need to know then you are deaf dumb or blind.

Noelle Hanrahan: Whose video tape?

Mumia Abu-Jamal: The video tape of the DA, the training videotape of Jack McMahon of the Philadelphia's DA office from 1986.

The Power of Truth is Final -- Free Mumia!

Listen to audio of this interview at prisonradio.org

Be sure to check the back cover for this month's Political Prisoner Freedom Week events!

Angola 3 continued

mond, Wallace and Woodfox were transferred from solitary and housed together in a newly-built maximum security dormitory for twenty men. This temporary release from solitary lasted for eight months, during which time Woodfox reflected: "The thing I noticed most about being with Herman is the laughing, the talking, the bumping up against one another... we've been denied this for so long. And every once in a while he'll put his arm around me or I'll put my arm around him. It's those kinds of things that make you human. And we're truly enjoying that."

In April, following his visit, Conyers wrote a letter to the FBI requesting their documents relating to the case, stating: "I am deeply troubled by what evidence suggests was a tragic miscarriage of justice with regard to these men. There is significant evidence that suggests not only their innocence, but also troubling misconduct by prison officials." Suspiciously, the FBI responded by claiming that they do not have any files on the case, because, allegedly, they have all been destroyed.

In his deposition taken October 22, 2008, Warden Burl Cain explained why he opposed granting Woodfox bail and removing him from solitary confinement.

Asked what gave him "such concern" about Woodfox, Cain stated: "He wants to demonstrate. He wants to organize. He wants to be defiant... A hunger strike is really, really bad, because you could see he admitted that he was organizing a peaceful demonstration. There is no such thing as a peaceful demonstration in prison." Cain then stated that even if Woodfox is innocent of the murder, he would still want to keep him in solitary, because "I still know he has a propensity for violence... he is still trying to practice Black Pantherism, and I still would not want him walking around my prison because he would organize the young new inmates. I would have me all kinds of problems, more than I could stand, and I would have the blacks chasing after them. I would have chaos and conflict, and I believe that."

The only other known US prisoner to have spent so many years in solitary confinement is Hugo Pinell, in California. One of the San Quentin Six, Pinell was a close comrade of Black Panther and prison author George Jackson. Currently housed in Pelican Bay State Prison's notorious "Security Housing Unit", Pinell has been in

continuous solitary since at least 1971. Robert Hillary King says Pinell "is a clear example of a political prisoner." This January, Pinell was denied parole for the next 15 years, which King says "is a sentence to die in prison. This is cruel and unusual punishment, which may be legal but is definitely not moral."

Robert Hillary King

The new book *From the Bottom of the Heap: The Autobiography of Robert Hillary King* has just been released by PM Press. This inspiring book tells of King's triumph over the horrors of Angola. Born poor in rural Louisiana, he was raised mostly by his heroic grandmother, who King recounts

"worked the sugar cane fields from sun up 'til sun down for less than a dollar a day. During the off-season, she washed, ironed clothes, and scrubbed floors for whites for pennies a day or for leftover food. Her bunions and blisters told a bitter but vivid tale of her travails."

King first entered Angola at the age of 18, for a robbery conviction. In his book, he admits to some non-violent burglaries at the time, but maintains his innocence regarding this conviction and every one since. Granted

parole in 1965, at the age of 22, he returned to New Orleans, got married, and began a brief semi-pro boxing career as "Speedy King." He was then arrested on charges of robbery, just weeks before his wife Clara gave birth to their son. After being held for over 11 months, his friend pled guilty to a lesser charge and was released on time served. Simultaneously, the DA dropped the charges against King, but he was not released, because his arrest, coupled with his friend's guilty plea was deemed a parole violation. Therefore, King was sent back to Angola where he served 15 months and was released again in 1969.

Upon release, King was again arrested on robbery charges, and was convicted, even though his co-defendant testified that he had only picked King out of a mug shot lineup after being tortured by police into making a false statement. King appealed, and while being held at New Orleans Parish Prison, he escaped, but was re-captured weeks later. Upon returning to Orleans Parish he met some of the New Orleans 12--BPP members arrested after a confrontation with police at a housing project. He was radicalized and worked with the Panthers

organizing non-violent hunger strikes, and engaging in self-defense against violent attacks from prison authorities.

In 1972, King moved to Angola shortly after the death of prison guard Brent Miller. Upon arrival, on grounds that King "wanted to play lawyer for another inmate," he was immediately put into solitary confinement: first in the "dungeon," then the "Red Hat," and finally to the Closed Correction Cell (CCR) unit, where he remained until his 2001 release. At CCR, King writes that the Angola BPP chapter and others continued to struggle, using the one hour a day outside their cells (when they were allowed to shower and interact in the walkway) to organize: "That was how we talked, passed papers, educated each other, and coordinated our actions."

King writes about the fight, started in 1977, to end the practice of routine rectal searches of prisoners: "Coming to a consensus conclusion that this practice was a carryover from slavery (before being sold, the slave had to be stripped and subjected to anal examination), and after months of appealing to our keepers, we decided to take a bold step: we would simply refuse a voluntary anal search. We would not be willing participants in our own degradation." When King and others refused, they were viciously beaten. Woodfox hired a lawyer on the prisoners' behalf and they filed a successful civil suit. The court ruled to ban "routine anal searches." Another victory came after a one month hunger strike that stopped the unhealthy and dehumanizing practice of putting the inmate's food on the floor to be slid underneath the cell door, whereby food would often be lost and the remaining food would usually get dirty.

In 1973, King was accused of murdering another prisoner, and was convicted at a trial where he was bound and gagged. After years of maintaining his innocence and appealing, his conviction was overturned in 2001, after he reluctantly pled guilty to a lesser charge of "conspiracy to commit murder" and was released on time served.

Kenny "Zulu" Whitmore

On June 21, 2008, Robert King attended the unveiling of a 40-foot mosaic dedicated to Angola prisoner and Angola BPP member Kenneth "Zulu" Whitmore, launching the "Free Zulu" campaign. King is working to publicize his case, saying "Zulu is a true warrior, Panther, a servant of the people. He has fought a good battle, for so long, unrecognized, unsupported!"

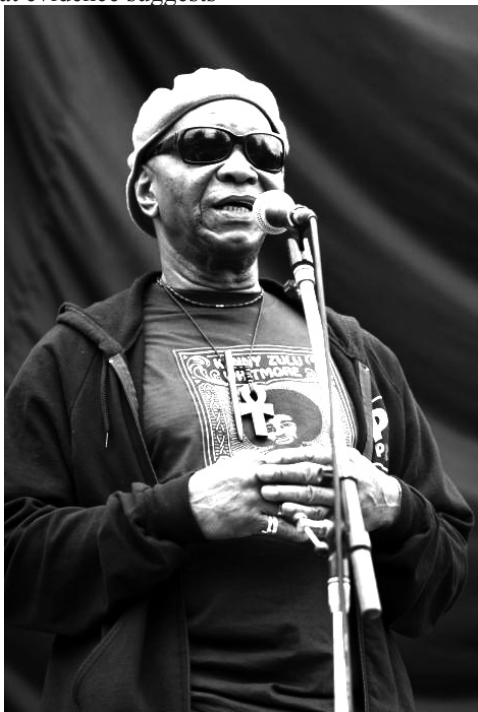
The mosaic adorns the back of activist/artist Carrie Reichardt's home in the West London suburb of Chiswick. Reichardt says "we chose to base the design around a modern day interpretation of the Goddess Kali. She is considered the goddess of liberation, time and transformation. We wanted to use a strong, positive image of a female that would give hope and encourage others to join the struggle to bring about social change. Her speech bubble says 'The revolution is now!'"

Imprisoned since 1977, Whitmore met Herman Wallace while imprisoned in 1973 at the East Baton Rouge Prison. Whitmore was released but then arrested and subsequently imprisoned at Angola when he was convicted of robbery and second-degree murder after he had returned to the community and been a political organizer. Just like the Angola 3, the case against him is full of holes, and he is appealing his conviction. Whitmore does not have a lawyer yet, so the freezulu.co.uk website is raising money to support his appeal.

Angola: The Last Slave Plantation

Three court cases are now pending: the federal civil rights lawsuit at the US Middle District Court, Albert Woodfox's upcoming oral arguments at the US Fifth Circuit, and Wallace's appeal at the State Supreme Court. At this critical stage, a new DVD has just been released by PM

continued next page



King speaking at the unveiling of a London mural dedicated to the Angola 3



A 40 foot mosaic in London dedicated to Angola BPP member Kenneth "Zulu" Whitmore

The Spectrial:

corporate parasites take on pirates in swedish court



by dave onion

The Swedish government recently had 3 web technicians in their courts to answer for the high crimes of sharing. In what is being dubbed the Spectrial (between spectacle and trial), the defendants are being accused by some of the most wealthy corporate parasites of the music industry of copyright infringement. The Swedish pirates however, unlike those pirates of yesteryear - the visionaries of brute force capital accumulation - were being challenged not for violently dispossessing anyone of goods, but for helping to make informational commodities like music, movies and software as widely available as possible for free. The defendants run the website thepiratebay.org, a search engine for BitTorrent filesharing.

File sharing, for those who are unfamiliar with the practice, is an especially easy way to share music, movies and other digital files across the internet (see sidebar). The Pirate Bay, though just one of many such sites, is an especially popular one known and loved for their defiant attitude in the face of the law and corporations.

The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) representing the likes of Warner, MGM, Columbia Pictures, 20th Century Fox Films, Sony and other major corporations, repeatedly made fools of themselves as well as the very notions of copyrights themselves as they blundered through the trial. At one point the demanded the loss generating website pay some 1.2 million kronor (US\$ 146,669) which prosecutor Hakan Roswall insisted was the minimum profit generated by the loss generating crew at pirate bay. An additional 117 million kronor (US\$13 million) in damages to sales was also demanded by the plaintiffs.

By the 2nd day of the trial, the prosecution, realizing they had confused most of the technical points they were arguing their case with, dropped all charges but "making available of copyrighted works", which according to the prosecution would allow them to focus on what they were in court for in the first place.



During the course of the trial, which attracted enormous attention in Sweden as well as international techie and filesharing spheres, a number of electronic direct actions took place. The first, targeting the IFPI's website, one of the complainants in the suit, was hacked and defaced with a message to the prosecutor. When the site was brought back up, a denial-of-service-attack crashed the site again. A few days later, hackers took over Bonnier Amigo's site, a record company. This time the following message was posted on the front page:

"Stop lying Peter Danowsky! (prosecuting attorney - ed.)
You censor us, we censor you. Freedom of speech goes both ways.
This is a war you can never win. The people always win one way or another.
The people will always have their freedom.
Brothers stand behind us
and together we will win
this fight!"

A major subtext of the trial and its implications has to do with control and democracy on the internet, which has been a major struggle since the internet's inception. And as with other areas such as drug patents, where we've seen incredibly rich corporations use patent law to further channel wealth to elites and consolidate their own control, here

some of the worst exploiters of artists and their fans (they would say consumers) have made some very public moves to attempt to seriously restrict access to what in many ways is still a new sort of commons, a space which is very public to those with access to the technology. It's been a sore spot for the music industry who are quickly losing control of product as the media of choice is so much less tangible or confineable.

Peter Sunde, one of the defendants, stressed the importance of just that aspect of the internet in a pre-trial press conference: "...it's not defending the technology, it's more like defending the idea of the technology and that's probably the most important thing in this case - the political aspect of letting the technology be free and not controlled by an entity which doesn't like technology."

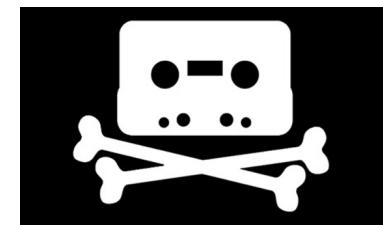
In the background, the trial has also generated a good deal of chatter in online discussions that go well beyond copyright law and the personal harassment of pirates to discuss the nature of capitalism and property itself.

As of press time the Spectrial has wrapped up and is awaiting a verdict due some time April 17th. The defendants still could face up to 2 years prison and massive fines. But it seems that regardless of the outcome, and (regardless of legality), filesharing is here to stay.



Outside the trial, hundreds of supporters gathered with pirate flags to support the defendants.

File sharing is easy:



Download a free BitTorrent client like utorrent (www.utorrent.com), vuze (www.vuze.com) or miro (www.getmiro.com). These are file sharing programs that run on your computer.

Look up torrents for your favorite movie, album, book or TV show on a Torrent tracker site. See below for some recommended sites.

Download the torrent, which is a tiny file which tells your client what to download. Your computer will then connect to other computers across the world and simultaneously download and share tiny bits of the files it's looking for until you have the whole file.

It's a distinctly anti-capitalist and anarchistic way to share resources and distribute goods, a community minded form of mutual aid. Unfortunately we have yet to find a way to distribute say food or building materials to those could really use it. I'm sure there are folks working on making that happen as you read this now. (umm, please tell us if you've figured that one out yet)

Recommended torrent sites:

onebigtorrent.org
Formerly called Chomsky Torrents, this site is full of hard to find anarchist and lefty material,

thepiratebay.org
Everything here from Bollywood to books, Dead Prez to Van Halen, latest magazines to whatever pre-release blockbusters a pirate will get their hands on.

freakyflicks.proboards.com
Weird ass freaky art films your thing? Here is where they are.

Angola 3 continued

Press, titled The Angola 3: Black Panthers and the Last Slave Plantation. The DVD is narrated by death-row journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, and features footage of King's 2001 release, as well as an interview with King and a variety of former Panthers and other supporters of the Angola 3, including Bo Brown, David Hilliard, Geronimo Ji Jaga (formerly Pratt), Marion Brown, Luis Talamantez, Noelle Hanrahan, Malik Rahim, and the late Anita Roddick.

The perpetuation of white supremacy and slavery at Angola is a central theme

throughout the film. Fred Hampton Jr., emphasizes that "we've got to make the connection between these modern day plantations, and what went down with chattel slavery." Scott Fleming, a lawyer for the Angola 3, says: "That prison is still run like a slave plantation... People like Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace are the example of what will happen to you if you resist that system."

Longtime Japanese-American activist Yuri Kochiyama says that Woodfox and Wallace "love people and will fight for justice even

if it puts them on the spot. I think of them as real heroes... who hated to see people in the prison get hurt." San Francisco journalist and former BPP member Kiilu Nyasha adds that "it behooves us to not forget those who were on the frontlines for us... We need to come to their rescue because they came to ours."

The many years of repression and torture have failed to extinguish the Angola 3's spirit or will to resist, as Woodfox explains in the DVD: "At heart, mind and spirit, we're still Black Panthers. We still believe

in the same principles as the BPP, we still advocate the ten point program. We still advocate that all prisoners, black or white, are human beings. They deserve to be treated as human beings."

The struggle continues! For more information, please visit www.angola3.org

Hans Bennett is an independent multimedia journalist (www.insubordination.blogspot.com) and co-founder of Journalists for Mumia Abu-Jamal (www.abu-jamal-news.com)

BUDGET WARS

continued from page 5

sales taxes than someone who makes a lot of money. To use an example: a financial analyst who wants to grab a meal with his colleague in Center City will pay 8% of the meal, the same as a security guard who picks up a sausage, egg and cheese from the vendor down the street before hustling back to work. Sounds fair, right? Wrong. Adding up all of the money spent over the year on items that the sales tax applies to, someone with a six-figure income will spend a lower proportion of their income on sales taxes than a family with an annual income of 25,000 dollars.

What's worse is that real estate tax would rise by 19 percent in the coming year, and by 14.5 percent from current levels in the fiscal year 2011. While these payments are based on a home's value, the city has done a terrible job at correctly assessing property values. The Inquirer reports that only **3 percent** of properties are assessed correctly. Not surprisingly, the poorest homeowners often end up paying a higher tax rate. (1) By enacting property taxes with such an unequal, ineffective system over wage and business taxes, Nutter has chosen to once again to place the burden and those least able to pay.

Daily News columnist, Jill Porter asked Nutter why Nutter's tax cuts weren't broad based. She wrote:

"After all, it seems the wrong moment to put the hurt on rowhouse dwellers who are gagging on AIG and GM. Perhaps spreading the pain around by raising wage and business taxes a little and property taxes a little less, was a legitimate course to consider... 'I don't understand,' Nutter said in response to my question, furrowing his brow in mock confusion. The hikes are "broad-based" because they affect every property owner in the city, including commercial property owners, he said - speaking with the exaggerated tolerance of an exasperated parent as we walked from Council chambers on the fourth floor of City Hall to his office on the second floor." (2)

If Jill Porter, a veteran Daily News reporter, is getting that kind of treatment we can expect that kind of paternalism and more. Our response must be firm and loud. "We won't pay for your crisis... tax the rich, not us!" We agree with The Coalition of Essential Services who brought coffee cups filled with pocket change to rattle that read, "No Cuts In Services, Fair Taxes."

Unions In The Cross Hairs: Nutter's Attack on Unions and the Memory of 86'

During Nutter's Budget address one thing stood out: Nutter demanded concessions from the city union workers. Instead of continuing to balance the budget on the backs of the neighborhoods, he has now declared he'll do it on the backs of workers in the city unions. Nutter's new budget game plan: leave the rich alone, some ser-

vice cuts (to start with), and put good city jobs in the cross-hairs. This will greatly affect all workers in the city; union and non-union alike.

Union jobs pay more and offer greater benefits. A 2008 paper by The Center for Economic and Policy Research on unions and women workers points out that, "on average, unionization raised women's wages by 11.2 percent - about \$2.00 per hour - compared to non-union women." It continues to point out that unionized women workers are more likely to have employer-provided health insurance and pension plans (3). This is an incentive for all of us to unionize at work and at the very least to value unions.

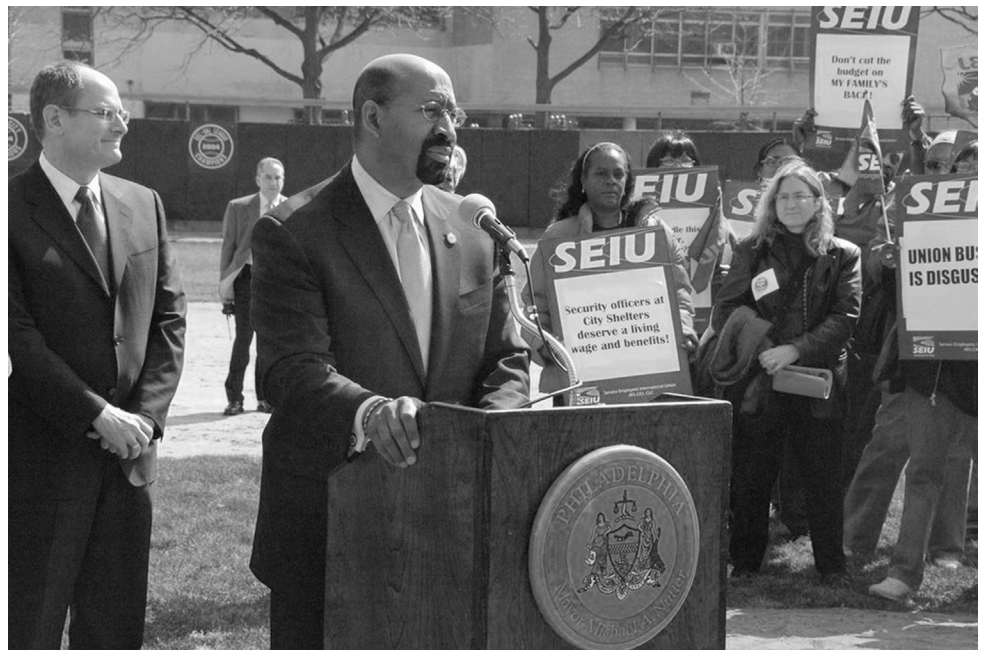
Union jobs set a benchmark for wages: if Nutter can get away with lowering standards in the highly unionized public sector, business can pay the rest of us even less. Corporations and business elites aren't dumb—they sense an advantage to pay less and make more.

If Nutter is successful in his goal in getting major wage and benefit concessions from union workers, this will carry over to those of us in the non-unionized private sector—most of us. Don't take our word for it. According to a 2003 briefing paper by The Economic Policy Institute, "Strong unions set a pay standard that nonunion employers follow. For example, a high school graduate whose workplace is not unionized but whose industry is 25% unionized is paid 5% more than similar workers in less unionized industries." (4)

With that in mind let's take a look at the 'give backs' and concessions Mayor Nutter is asking of the city's unions:

- **Reduce the benefits of all new city workers by moving them into a hybrid pensions plan that gives them less guaranteed retirement benefits and supplements it with a 401 (K). 401(K) plans are highly unstable because they are retirement plans invested in the stock market and subject to the whims of the financial markets(5).** Many people who contributed for years to 401Ks lost huge chunks of their retirement as the economy collapsed—Fidelity Financial reports that 27% of 401k assets were lost in 2008. Additionally, the plan splits city workers into a two-tier plan. Actually, the plan is already two-tiered so it will now be three-tiered. There will be three classes of workers in a union: older workers who have good pension plans and newer workers who get much less. This creates a division within the union that can be exploited; future city administrations might demand cuts from the old timers' pension plan in years to come and the newer workers will see no need to fight for a good pension plan they don't get. A classic divide and conquer strategy.

- **Require all city workers who have the good pension plan to increase their contributions out of their weekly paycheck by asking the State to declare the pension plan "Severely Distressed," which would then require the city to contribute less to the plan.** Never mind that the city has been underfunding the pension fund for year, relying on bond market sales to delay the issue. A report on Philadelphia's pension plan, "Philadel-



Nutter hears union activists loud and clear



City workers on strike in 1986

phia's Quiet Crisis," notes that the pension plan is on par with other cities, but has been mismanaged by the city for years. Now, Nutter is asking city workers to pick up the tab. (6)

- **FREEZE WAGES FOR FIVE YEARS** Not only will this hurt municipal workers, it will also lower tax revenues by giving working folks less money to spend.

- **LOWER CITY CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEALTHCARE, SO WORKERS HAVE TO PAY MORE FOR THEIR HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN.** As we have mentioned before, this influences all of us. Business people will pick up on this and make us pay even more for our health care plans. That is if we have one to begin with, and aren't dependent on the Health Centers where we'll now be paying a sliding scale fee!

Nutter is asking union workers to volunteer to take unpaid 'furlough' days, basically days off to save the city money. So workers are strapped for cash from all of these concessions and they're asked to take an unpaid day off when many now can't afford it.

Upon hearing Mayor Nutter's proposal, Brian McBride, President of the Firefighter Union (IAFF Local 22) put it accurately and simply when he stated "It's war." Correct sir, this is class war. Philadelphia's budget crisis is a result of the international

financial crisis—a crisis engineered by the super-rich through speculation, deregulation and the need to turn every aspect of life over to the whim of financial markets. The city's crisis is one of many being felt across the globe as countries, states and cities struggle to meet people's needs as banks receive public bailout after public bailout - from Wall Street bankers making mega bucks on speculation, to this economic crisis, to Nutter's announcement of cuts to essential services and to the present regressive taxes and war on organized city workers.

We need to recognize Nutter's new divide and conquer strategy: union workers vs. neighborhoods—all while leaving the rich high and dry. We need to support union struggles just as we defended essential services—with the ultimate goal of making the rich pay for their crisis. We'll venture to make a few predictions as to messages that you'll hear from the Nutter Administration, Philly's business elite and the media. A few propositions in response:

- **Their Message:** You make \$8.00 an hour working in the service industry slinging coffee or working retail at the Gallery while these fat cat union workers make way more. Isn't it only fair that they give up a little to pay for the services in your neighborhoods for the libraries, trash pick up, the rec centers, etc?

continued next page...

- **Our Response:** City union workers do make more than other Philly workers in comparable positions in the private sector. This is because they have been organized into unions for a long time and have fought for decent wages, benefits and working conditions through taking collective action on the job: picketing, holding rallies, striking, and getting their co-workers involved in action to put pressure on the city administration. This wasn't easy work. Meanwhile there are plenty of wealthy companies and individuals who pay their workers low wages in the private sector. So who do you think should shoulder the burden for services? City workers who have good jobs, or the wealthy companies and individuals who make money by paying sub-standard wages to their workers?

- **Their Message:** City workers in other regions don't have such a good deal. Philly city workers should realize how good they have it and need to give up their 'high' standards for the common good?

- **Our Response:** Yes, city workers elsewhere don't make as much, because business communities in other cities have been better organized to influence politics. They have put pressure on city governments to keep city workers unorganized, with low wages and benefits. Why should we as Philadelphians lower our standards and let the business community dictate all of the terms? Business people are in the business of making a profit. Why can't they give up some of their profit through progressive taxes for THE COMMON GOOD?

- **Their Message:** The unions are entrenched and powerful. They're holding the city hostage and negatively affecting the budget and services by not giving into the mayor's demands:

- **Our Response:** It's true the unions have some measure of power. That's because they're organized and if worst comes to worst some of them can play the trump card of withholding their labor (i.e striking.) But the elite business community of Philadelphia is by far more powerful. So powerful that during this whole budget crisis they have not been asked to give up a single thing, except a tax break they were going to receive. They are truly

holding the city hostage and we need to put pressure on the mayor and demand concessions from them, not other working Philadelphians.

Bill Rubin, a representative of AFSCME District Council 33, the union that represents blue-collar workers and also the largest union in the city, said, "It's a fairy tale. It's predicated on givebacks. None of this is in stone." Mr. Rubin is stating the obvious. City workers have a contract and because of that all of this will have to be negotiated when their contract expires this year.

This brings to mind the militant strike led by city workers in 1986 under Mayor Wilson Goode. Goode played hardball with the city unions and, backs up against the wall, the unions did what they had to do: they stopped working and went out on strike. Garbage piled up on the streets, libraries and pools closed with no workers to run them and all because Goode wouldn't negotiate in good faith with union workers. City workers make our city run, if they are threatened they can and will shut it down...as they should and as they have. However if they do go on strike we propose to the unions that they enact a social strike. Let garbage pile up in the neighborhoods of the rich while pick up continues in regular Philadelphia neighborhoods. Let the stench surround city hall.

By going after the unions, Nutter is playing a dangerous game that could bring 1986 into 2009. If so, he'll try to whip up sentiment in the neighborhoods against the unions. Let's not fall into that trap. The more we stand in solidarity- knowing that the neighborhoods and the unions are in this together, the better the chance we have at stopping the attacks on unions and making the rich and wealthy business community pay. We should attend union rallies and pickets and organize our neighbors and friends to put pressure on city council and the mayor to tax the rich.

We recognize that unions are complicated organizations. In the best case, unions are run and managed democratically by workers themselves—the most democratic and militant labor activism in the U.S. has occurred when union members take matters into their own hands. In the worse case, union bureaucrats collaborate with management against workers or with the broader racist and imperialist politics that are the political 'status quo' in the U.S. At present, unions are struggling against declining membership brought by Reagen-era attacks on organized

labor and deindustrialization. Union leaders often make 'strategic' decision that sometimes sell their members short and discourage militant, or even effective, action. We see the current budget struggle as a defensive one; city attacks on the unions won't make them more progressive or democratic institutions. What will, however, are broader connections among movements and an understanding of how elites attack different kinds of working class power in different ways.

We see no present indication that the city unions are planning on selling out their members. The best way to prevent this, however, is the power of rank-and-file city workers to push their leadership to take to meet their needs as workers. We encourage them to self-organize and take any action that is appropriate and sufficient to win, be it slow downs, sick outs or work stoppages. Solidarity is needed among other 'non-city' unions and non-union workers as well. All of us as workers—not just city workers—make Philadelphia work. If we were organized and wished to do so we could shut this entire city down, threatening the accumulation of profits, and make the wealthy interests quickly concede to our demands.

In the end it is completely unacceptable for the budget to be balanced on the backs of working people—either by cutting essential services or attacking good city jobs. The mayor doesn't want to ask his rich buddies to pay up to resolve our budget crisis. Just a short while ago it seemed impossible that we'd be able to stop so many cuts to essential services, but by organizing, protesting and raising a ruckus we did. Now it's time that we force him, city council and the business community at large make the rich pay.

We Won't Pay for Your Crisis

Wall Street gambled, and lost. Bankers have been all over the news as they run to the government for handouts, asking taxpayers to pay for their losses. Many people are furious at this upward transfer of wealth—and rightly so. While it's easy to see the excesses of the super rich in the case of AIG, it's harder to see how the current financial crisis affects something like a city budget. But Philly's initial budget shortfalls were due to a bursting housing market bubble, a Wall Street-induced economic recession and a tougher market for municipal bonds. To use the last example: for years, investors have been invited to make a profit on the operations of the city of Philadelphia. Now they're less willing to do so.

To make up for the shortfalls Nutter is asking us to pay. People across the world struggling to maintain services call this tactic "austerity." When the rich use the financial market to gamble on the basics of life--food, housing, the right to city services--the poor are asked to pay. When they organize and say "no!" the rich are forced to cough up the money.

Ultimately, as anti-capitalists we envision a world where the rich don't simply 'pay what they owe,' but where we—as common people—dispose of the power and privilege of the wealthy entirely. The production and distribution of society's wealth should be decided democratically, by people, and not by the elite, city hall or the machinations of the so-called 'free market'. We believe in a 'movement of movements' that can bring revolutionary change and create a world in which regular people make decisions about their workplaces, their communities and their cities through direct democracy, self-management and people's assemblies.

Across the world people are mobilizing—just like the people of Philadelphia—to defend their rights to the basics of life. From Indonesia to France to Chile, people are demanding that the rich pay for this crisis. While organizing to defend essential services we must be clear that we won't pay for the losses of the rich. With this in mind, we can build a world where human rights aren't abstract commodities to be gambled with.

Endnotes

- (1) "Real Estate Roulette," Philadelphia Inquirer, June 22, 2008.
- (2) "How the mayor deftly complied with the People's wishes," Jill Porter, Philadelphia Daily News, March 20, 2008
- (3) "Unions and Upward Mobility for Workers," John Schmitt, Center for Economic and Policy Research, December 2008 (www.cepr.net/documents/publications/unions_and_upward_mobility_for_women_workers_2008_12.pdf)
- (4) "How Unions Help All Workers," Lawrence Mishel with Matthew Walters, Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper, August 2003 (www.epi.org/briefingpapers/143/bp143.pdf)
- (5) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-miller/state-of-the-401k-amazing_b_166211.html
- (6) "Philadelphia's Quiet Crisis," Pew Charitable Foundation. http://www.pewtrusts.org/news_room_detail.aspx?id=38598

We Can Live Without Capitalism continued

These action include:

- Removing all money from banks and defaulting on debts and mortgage payments. In the case of bank deposits, anyone who wants to move forward can do it. (More information on the bank strike can be found on page 7).
- Stopping rent payments. We'll collaborate to keep people in their homes.
- Stopping payments for basic services or only paying what we consider to be fair.
- The collectivization of the basic resources that the system doesn't utilize or abuses: land for cultivation, empty apartments, leftover food in the marketing chain.

The defense of basic services, housing, and collective resources with direct action and mutual aid by all participants.

- The use of money only when it's essential in small businesses (bakeries, grocery stores, etc.) We'll progressively

construct alternatives to money at the same time.

- These acts of desertion will be accompanied by many others that will be happening, but among all these we can generalize:
- The creation of alternatives: sharing, barter, free stores, 'really free markets,' alternative currencies, popular assemblies and cooperatives. We'll be learning to live without money and share, assuring that all of the participants have their basic needs covered.

At the same time that we begin to live without capitalism we will initiate one--or, even better--various public events with anyone interested in doing so.

Starting on September 17th, every third Thursday of the month will be considered a day of public debate about the organization of society, offering people the chance to compare capitalism with the post-capitalist proposals we're constructing. We're inviting the whole world to

become part of the process. The first of these debates will be October 15th. These days, using decentralized coordination among affinity groups, we'll hit the streets and ask the rest of the population to stop so that we can debate with everyone what kind of society we want to live in.

This plan of action is subject to variation given the circumstances and collective intelligence of those participating. Beyond today, this movement won't stop until this new process has achieved its goal—that is, until life after capitalism becomes a reality.

(1)Translator's Note: De-growth (in French: décroissance), is a movement advocates a gradual decrease in economic output.

Civilian Uprising against Barrick Gold in Tanzania

Mine security shoots young man, villagers respond by destroying \$7 million in equipment

by Sakura Saunders
December 24th, 2008

Last December, reports surfaced in the mainstream press that thousands of villagers had raided a gold mine in Northern Tanzania, setting fire to \$7 million* worth of mine equipment. Most reports blamed problems with crime in the area, calling the intruders "gold-seekers."

While the spokesman for Barrick Gold** Tanzania, Teweli Teweli, describes these villagers as "well-organized groups" who attacked the pit following the blasting of high-grade ore, others paint Barrick as the aggressor in this event, citing immediate and historic causes that have been largely ignored by the international community.

According to several witnesses, the immediate cause of the civilian uprising was the killing of a young man named Mang'weina Mwitwa Mang'weina. Human rights lawyer Tundu Lissu, who represents many of the villagers, explains that Mang'weina and some friends were engaged in an argument with Barrick security when one of the guards shot Mang'weina, who was unarmed at the time. This incident caused an uproar within the community, which immediately took up stones, overpowered mine security (who then fled), and attacked the mine, setting fire to millions worth of equipment.

Mang'weina himself is a part of the legacy of the North Mara mine. He was one of the thousands of unemployed locals in the area, angry over the mine's recent history of forced displacement, loss of livelihoods, human rights abuses and ongoing repression. He is the seventh person killed at the hands of mine security since July 2005, when the killing of a local boy sparked a similar uprising that resulted in the destruction of mine equipment and the subsequent detention of over 200 villagers.***

Eyewitnesses to the 2005 killing told The Guardian (Tanzania) that "the boy who was shot dead was walking past the company premises when company security guards, suspecting him of stealing oil, stopped him. When the boy failed to heed the order, the guards called the police who, before even questioning him, shot him in the chest."

Not one year later, security guards employed by Barrick Gold allegedly shot – five times in the back – another villager who was alleged to have illegally entered the mine complex, bringing the death toll to six.

According to Lissu in a letter written in June 2006:

The killings represent a major shift in Barrick's strategy for dealing with the troublesome locals who have always opposed the Mine. In the period after the forced evictions of the villagers in August 2001, hundreds of villagers, particularly community leaders and prominent locals, were targeted for illegal arrests, criminal prosecutions, and long term imprisonment. Numerous local leaders including the area's [late] Member of Parliament Chacha Zakayo Wangwe and elected Member of the Tarime District Council

Augustino Nestory Sasi were harassed this way, with the latter being sentenced to 30 year jail before international supporters got him out on appeal to the High Court of Tanzania in December 2004.

Calculating from media reports, Lissu estimates that over 10,000 artisanal miners, peasant farmers and their families



The Mwitwa family lives next to Barrick Gold's North Mara mine. Waste rock on the edge of the pit can be seen behind their home. PHOTO: Allan Cedillo Lissner

were kicked out of the area to make way for the North Mara mine in 2001. Since that time, there has been ongoing tension between the mine and the local communities.

According to Allan Cedillo Lissner, a Toronto-based photojournalist who recently interviewed families surrounding the North Mara mine, "Ongoing conflict between the mine and local communities have created a climate of fear for those who live nearby." Since the mine opened in 2002, one family told Lissner that they live in a state of constant anxiety because they are repeatedly harassed and intimidated by the mine's private security forces and by government police. "There have been several deadly confrontations in the area and every time there are problems at the mine, the Mwitwa family say their compound is the first place the police come looking. During police operations the family scatters in fear to hide in the bush, 'like fugitives,' for weeks at a time waiting for the situation to calm down," Lissner explains.

The Mwitwa family explained that they used to farm and raise livestock, telling Lissner that "now there are no pastures because the mine has almost taken the whole land ... we have no sources of income and we are living only through God's wishes. ... We had never experienced poverty before the mine came here." They also told Lissner that they would like to be relocated, but the application process has been complicated, and they feel the amount of compensation offered was merely "candy."

According to Tanzanian journalist and community advocate Evans Rubara, this latest uprising "is a sign to both the government of Tanzania and the International community (especially Canada) that poor and marginalized people also get tired of oppression." He hopes that the

recent conflict will inspire Barrick "to start another strategy that will bring a good and constructive relationship with the local communities by implementing programs that do not enhance more looting and belittle Tanzania, leaving thousands in destitution."

Since this most recent uprising, dozens of villagers have been arrested. According to Lissu, who plans to represent those arrested, "They have arrested dozens of people; [Barrick is] on a war path; these people have been denied bail, they are targeting the youth and repression is on."

Lissu also spoke about reports of weapons making their way into the North Mara area. "Two days ago, we got information that [Barrick is] importing weapons: a ton and a half of tear gas, and hand grenades were transported to the mine on Thursday. The hand grenades were seized by customs on the way to the North Mara Gold Mine, but have since been let through," he told Protest-Barrick.net on the phone from Tanzania.

Sakura Saunders is an editor for protestbarrick.net, an all-volunteer news site that networks organizations and community groups organized against Barrick Gold around the world.

* On December 17, 2008 Barrick Gold said it had revised down the damage to its North Mara Mine in Tanzania during an attack last week to about \$7 million from an earlier estimate of \$15 million.

** In January 2006, Barrick Gold merged with Placer Dome, who previously owned the North Mara mine.

*** By mid 2006 all of the villagers detained after the 2005 uprising had been released by the courts after the authorities failed to prosecute them.



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Activist counter-intelligence: leaked fbi document

Wikileaks.org, the site responsible for leaking a multitude of useful documents to media and activists, has posted an article titled, "FBI: Tactics Used by Eco-Terrorists to Detect and Thwart Law Enforcement Operations, 15 Apr 2004," an appraisal of counterintelligence resources in our community.

Though government intelligence is widely known to be an oxymoron, this could lend some insight into their thinking and methodology, acting as a guide to activist counter-intelligence for the animal & earth liberation movement. The document studies the successful methods by which the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), Earth Liberation Front (ELF), Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC), Earth First! and anarchist groups evade and/or thwart law enforcement methods to gather intelligence.

Tactics Used by Eco-Terrorists to Detect and Thwart Law Enforcement Operations

-- Environmental extremists consistently study and disseminate the methods, tactics, and legal guidelines under which law enforcement officials operate in an effort to expose law enforcement undercover agents, sources, and cooperating witnesses. Literature appearing in print form or on websites sympathetic to the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), Earth Liberation Front (ELF), Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC), and anarchist groups provides detailed instructional material on a variety of topics, including ways to evade and/or thwart law enforcement methods.

-- One of the earliest examples of this type of instructional material is David Foreman's Eco-Defense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching, segments of which continue to circulate on the Internet within the anarchist and radical environmentalist communities. Foreman was a founding member of Earth First! in the 1980's. Despite being written in 1985, the book is still referenced by anarchists and animal rights/environmental extremists as a useful "how-to" manual.

-- Law enforcement officials should be particularly cognizant of the sections of Eco-Defense that deal with the identification of undercover law enforcement officers, confidential informants, and cooperating witnesses. Among the admonishments listed in the book are the following:

"Monkeywrenchers" (a term used to designate saboteurs) are urged to "study who has access to information now believed to be in the hands of the police" and "notice anyone who suddenly attempts to distance themselves [sic]."

Foreman's book notes, "often a confidential informant is used to introduce the infiltrator to the group so that she will be more

readily accepted." Thus, law enforcement officials should recognize that merely using an existing source to gain access for an undercover agent/officer might not be sufficient for establishing the officer's credibility.

Eco-Defense warns that potential undercover officers may "assume roles outside the target organization" that could increase access for the officer. The book further advises, "a favorite is to pass themselves off as writers or members of the news media, or even as someone hoping to produce a documentary for public access television." Eco-Defense also suggests that undercover agents may pose as defense attorneys in an effort to gather information from recently arrested activists.

The book also asserts that undercover agents frequently pose as utility workers or phone company repairmen for the purpose of gaining access to a suspect's living quarters. The book asserts that, once access is obtained, the agent is free to plant listening devices or observe illegal activities to justify a search warrant. The book advises readers to demand identification and verify the repairman's legitimacy.

Finally, Eco-Defense warns incarcerated activists that "jailhouse snitches" may seek information for law enforcement authorities.

Eco-Defense offers several ways to detect law enforcement sources or undercover officers, including applying strict operational security measures in preparation for acts of eco-terrorism. The book cautions activists to compartmentalize operational plans and to limit foreknowledge of the target to one person within the cell, revealing the target only en route to the action. The book further admonishes that "in such cases, be suspicious of someone who suddenly has to make a phone call after learning the target or other plans...suffice it to say that such operations should only be undertaken by small groups of people who have known each other for years and have previously operated together."

With individuals suspected of being an informant or undercover agent, the book recommends a tactic known as "baiting" – essentially providing the suspected agent/informant with singular information designed to provoke a law enforcement response. Specifically, the book suggests concocting a fictional future attack and providing the details of the attack to the suspected informant/agent. According to Eco-Defense, "if the suspected undercover agent is the only one provided with this information, and the police make the appropriate response, you have reasonable proof that the 'suspect' is indeed an agent." The book suggests that this process can be employed against several people at one time by providing each individual with

similar, but slightly different information, asserting that the law enforcement response will indicate which individual is acting as an informant/undercover agent.

Eco-Defense identifies additional methods by which informants or undercover officers may expose themselves, including:

Seeking information for which they have no need to know.

Attempting to get people to repeat previous incriminating statements, ostensibly to record the statements.

Casting suspicion on others to divert suspicion from themselves.

Volunteering for clerical or leadership roles within an organization in hopes of gaining access to information about the group.

Showing nervousness during an action.

Leaving meetings or actions briefly to make phone calls.

Probing for detailed information (e.g. names, times, dates, locations, etc.) indicating that an informant/agent may be taping the conversation.

Repeatedly discussing illegal activities even after conversation has shifted to unrelated matters.

Regularly inquiring about individuals believed to be leaders of a group.

Expressing particularly radical or inflammatory ideas.

To thwart the efforts of law enforcement officials – specifically undercover operations and confidential sources – the book provides several tips to current or prospective eco-extremists:

Activists are urged to follow a "need-to-know" rule in which detailed information regarding planned direct actions is compartmentalized and restricted to the individuals involved in the action.

Activists are advised that when an individual within the group expresses reservations about a specific direct action, that individual should be removed from the direct action cell. This removal should be done gradually without destroying personal bonds to the individual, thereby reducing the individual's incentive to retaliate by cooperating with law enforcement authorities.

The book cautions activists to be leery of individuals that introduce new members to the group and then suddenly disassociate themselves from the organization. The suggestion is that the new member may be an undercover agent and that the existing member may in fact be a law enforcement

informant.

Similarly, activists are advised to be suspicious of group members that are arrested for criminal charges with no connection to the group's goals or objectives. For instance, individuals arrested on drug charges become vulnerable to law enforcement recruitment with promises of leniency in return for cooperation.

Finally, activists are encouraged to sever any contacts with the so-called "criminal element," such as violent gangs or drug-traffickers, warning that such groups are "teeming" with law enforcement informants.

In addition to the methods and tactics discussed above, eco-terrorists promote and follow strict operational security with respect to communications, employing encryption in electronic communications and avoiding telephonic conversations about criminal activity. Eco-Defense also illustrates that eco-extremists are aware of traditional law enforcement investigative techniques, including analysis of telephone records, mail covers, vehicle tracking, and consensual recordings.

Eco-Defense is merely one of the many documents within the eco-extremist movement demonstrating the movement's in-depth study and knowledge of law enforcement techniques and methods of operation. By closely scrutinizing potential informants and undercover agents, eco-terrorists are more capable of thwarting successful law enforcement penetration. Law enforcement officials should be cognizant of the above-mentioned tactics, and recognize that eco-terrorists closely study law enforcement tactics, procedures, and policies. As a result, creative undercover scenarios must be carefully planned and adequately backstopped.

This assessment was prepared by the Counterterrorism and Cyber Divisions of the FBI. Comments and queries may be addressed to the Unit Chief, Domestic Terrorism Analysis Unit at (202) 324-8664.

<http://wikileaks.org/leak/fbi-ecoterrorism-tactics-2004.pdf>



Thursday April 9

"Radically Democratic Urbanism" with Matt Hern
7pm @ Wooden Shoe Books

Friday April 10

Matt Hern talk "Against Tolerance: A New Way"
7:30 pm @ A-Space

Brandywine Peace Community Rally at Lockheed Martin weapons complex in Valley Forge/King of Prussia, Mall & Goddard Boulevards
3:00 pm behind the King of Prussia Mall
info: www.brandywinepeace.com

Tuesday April 14

Scribe Video: The Masculinity Project sponsored by the National Black Programming Consortium
This is a new media project conceived and produced by the NBPC which tells an intergenerational story of black maleness intended to broaden the very definition of the word masculinity.
7pm @ International House, 37th and Chestnut

Sunday March 15th

Saint March Collective Gallery Opening
2p.m. until 8 p.m. 406 South St.

Pedal Co-op Benefit Show

8 pm at Marvelous Records 208 S.

40th St.

Monday April 16th

Prisoner letter writing at lava
6 pm at 4134 Lancaster Ave

Wednesday April 18th

Clark Park Peoples' Flea Market
9 am to 5 pm Baltimore Avenue at 43rd Street

Thursday April 19th

Black and Blue Film Showing and Q & A
5:30pm at the A-Space info: 215-727-0882 leave msg

Tenderbridge Benefit Party
Reaching Out to Disadvantaged Youth in Baltimore and West Philadelphia
4pm @ Dock Street Brewery 50th and Baltimore ave
info: www.tenderbridge.org

Monday, April 20

Retro on the Black Panther Party with members of the original Philadelphia BPP
6-8pm at Treehouse Books, 1430 Susquehanna Ave.

Tuesday April 21

"We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations from 1960-1975" by Muhammad Ahmad (Maxwell Stanford Jr.) book release party.

6-8pm at Black & Noble Bookstore, 2nd Floor
1436 Erie Ave.

Wednesday April 22

Robert Hillary King of the Angola 3 speaks
7pm at University of Pennsylvania (exact location TBA)
info: 770-845-6179 / g.grigoriev036@gmail.com

"Thomas Paine and the Promise of America" a lecture
6pm @ the Historical Society of Pennsylvania 1300 Locust
for more info see Robin's Bookstore website

"Crips and Bloods: Made in America" a film screening followed by a panel discussion to address the streets of Philadelphia and violence reduction.
Free and open to the public
6:30 pm @ The Rotunda 40th and Walnut

Thursday April 23

"Arm the Spirit: A Woman's Journey Underground and Back" with Diana Block
7pm @ Wooden Shoe Books
Thursday April 29

Mark your calendar! defenestrator film screening to raise money for our prisoner mailing.
8pm @ Firehouse Bikes (see liber-

REBEL CALENDAR

ated spaces)
See our calendar for more info: www.defenestrator.org

Friday April 24th

MORE THAN A BOOK RELEASE! A CELEBRATION OF JAILHOUSE LAWYERS! Featuring all the authors from throughout the week as well as Paul Wright, editor of Prison Legal News, Amin, formerly "Harold Wilson," - freed from death row in the US, Ramona Africa of the MOVE Organization, Steven Hawkins, Executive Vice President of the NAACP, Linn Washington Jr., Philadelphia Tribune Columnist, Temple U Professor of Journalism, Sonia Sanchez, Goldi, daughter of Wadiya and Mumia, Seeds of Wisdom, MOVE's Revolutionary hip hop group, and many more!
6pm at Church of the Advocate, 1801 W. Diamond St.

Saturday April 25th

Adolfo Mato and Jan Susler,, keynote speakers of the National Boricua Human Rights Network. Also appearing, Carlos Africa of the MOVE Organization.

7:30pm at La Iglesia de Cristo y San Ambrosio 6th and Venango Streets

Microcosm Publishing Zine Reading Tour
6:30 PM, 1202 s 46th street @ Borrowed Time (near Kingsessing)

Thursday April 29

Mark your calendar! defenestrator film screening to raise money for our prisoner mailing.
8pm @ Firehouse Bikes (see liberated spaces)

See our calendar for more info: www.defenestrator.org

Saturday May 2

"Shut Down the Army Experience Center" Franklin Mills Mall
For info go to http://shutdowntheac.net/

Saturday May 16th

RALLY TO FREE THE MOVE 9!
12-3pm at 11th & Market St.
info: onamovellja@aol.com, 215 387 4107

ONGOING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

the defenestrator

Are you a self motivated, revolutionary minded troublemaker?? Come and join this exciting project!! Every other week the defcollective meets to plan future issues, organize our notorious benefit dance parties, edit text, gossip and speculate on the inevitable collapse of capitalism. We want you here!!!
Every 1st and 3rd Monday of the month upstairs at LAVA, 4134 Lancaster Ave.

Food Not Bombs

In a country hungry for war, that bombs countries hungry for food..
Rain or shine: Servings are Sundays at 5:00PM and Mondays at 7:00PM across from the Free Library on Vine Street between 19th and 20th Streets
In West Philly : sharings happen every Wednesday @ 5pm-CEDAR PARK (50th and Baltimore)

for more info, see

ACT UP

Weekly Meeting Every Monday from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm St. Lukes Church; 330 S. 13th St. (between Pine & Spruce) Email: actupphilly@critpath.org for more info.

Books Through Bars

Packing Café Every Tuesday from 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm The A Space; 4722 Baltimore Ave. E-mail: info@booksthroughbars.org for more info

International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia

Interested in being involved in the campaign for Mumia's release either email icffmaj@aol.com or call 215 476 8812

Defenestrator Movie Night

Last Thursday of every month at Firehouse Bicycles at 8pm
50th & Baltimore to benefit the defenestrator prisoner mailing
Call for info (215)727-9692 or info(at)firehousebicycles.com

Prison Letter Writing Night

Come to learn, work and share by reading and

writing to prisoners in Pennsylvania's solitary confinement units.
3rd Thursdays at LAVA 6-9pm

PRAWN (Philadelphia Regional Anti-War Network)

Meets 1st Tues. at Local 4, AFSCME, 1606 Walnut. 6:30-9pm www.prawnworks.net

The Philadelphia Icarus Project: A Radical Mental Health Collective

Philadelphia Icarus holds its meetings the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month from 6-8 pm at the A-Space Anarchist Community Space. philadelphiaicarusproject@msn.com

Wooden Shoe Books People's movie night

Free movie screenings held every saturday at Wooden Shoe Book Store. 7:30 PM, 508 south 5th street -- 215 413 0999

LIBERATED SPACES

LAVA

The Lancaster Avenue Autonomous space is a center for radical media and organizing located at 4134 Lancaster Ave. in the Belmont Neighborhood of West Philly. We hold regular general meetings every 2nd Tuesday of the month. info: 215.387.6155 or info@lavazone.org * lavazone.org

A-Space

A collectively run anarchist gallery and meeting/community space. Events are free and generally start at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted.

Accessible by the 34 trolley. Plenty of parking for cars and bikes. They pass the hat to cover rent. 4722 Baltimore Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19143 215.727.0882 a-space@defenestrator.org

WOODEN SHOE BOOKS and RECORDS

Anarchist bookstore owned and run by an unpaid collective of geniuses with nothing better to do than sit around talking philosophy and riots. Carries a wide range of anarchist and radical books, periodicals, pamphlets, T-shirts, patches, CD's records etc.

508 S. Fifth Street Philadelphia, PA
215.413.0999 woodenshoe@rocketmail.com

Firehouse Bikes

A worker owned collective bike shop. 50th and Baltimore

The Divine Bicycle Church

Bike repair co-op at Neighborhood Bike Works. Tools, advice and recycled parts available. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday from 6:30-9pm 40th and Locust Walk, behind St. Mary's Church

Crossroads Women's Center

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-2pm or by appointment
33 Maplewood Mall, Germantown 215-848-1120

The Friends Center

American Friends Service Committee HQ. Contains meeting spaces and offices for a gazillion different entities.
1501 Cherry Street