

Updates for December 9th

25 Nov - Sekou Odinga is Free!

It was a grand day Tuesday, November 25, when friends, family and supporters welcomed home Sekou Odinga.

MORE:

For 33 years, the Black Panther political prisoner had been incarcerated. Tireless efforts from supporters, the Sekou Odinga Defense Committee and family, especially his children and his wife, WBAI radio host Dequi Kioni-Sadiki, helped win his freedom. Together, they celebrated heartily at the National Black Theater.

25 Nov - Remember the Photos on My Father's Prison Walls

Written on September 11th, this piece by Noor Elashi was only recently published.

MORE:

Yesterday, on the eve of the thirteenth anniversary of 9/11, I received an email from my father saying that the photos affixed to the walls of his prison cell were ripped down and called “contraband” by the officer who took them.

My father is a political prisoner, convicted of terrorism charges in the vacuum of post-9/11 hysteria and incarcerated at a federal prison in southern Illinois—all under allegations stemming from his indisputable philanthropic work.

Until recently, the walls of my father’s 9-by-5-foot cell were covered with eleven photos of children from all over the world—children who were injured or killed during recent political events. My father wrote my family, heartbroken, to say that even though he had collected these images from The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune and other publications, they were still seized—with no notice.

My father, Ghassan Elashi, is currently serving a 65-year-prison-sentence at the Communications Management Unit in Marion, Illinois for conspiracy to send Material Support in the form of humanitarian aid to charities in the West Bank and Gaza that prosecutors claimed were associated with designated terrorists; our biggest defense thus far (and the reason my father may be vindicated in due time) is that his charity, the Holy Land Foundation, used the same exact Palestinian charities that our own government agency—the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)—used to distribute its aid.

In his note, my father described the eleven photographs to me, images that we may have all seen during one time or another, images that we often glance away from because they are so hard to look at. My father brought back each photo to life in the order that he remembered it:

Image one. Afghan children, wrapped in colorful clothing, lay in rubble after their village was bombarded. According to news reports, they suffocated to death along with their mothers while attempting to seek shelter.

Image two. A young girl in Yemen stands on the street with a paintbrush in her hand. Behind her is a street graffiti drawing of a massive drone and a statement that reads, “Why did you kill my family.”

Image three. A Syrian toddler pulls away from the camera after being rescued from a building where his family once resided. The building was destroyed by a barrel bomb. The child, masked in dust, tightly hugs the man who rescued him.

Image four. Two preschool-aged brothers, also from Syria, sit on a bench with wounds on their faces. Inside a

makeshift clinic in the war-torn town of Homs, the older boy cries while the younger one—despite his inability to comprehend his reality—attempts to console his brother.

Image five. Nearly 200 Uighur refugees occupy an asylum camp in the forests of southern Thailand. The camp, surrounded by a razor-wire fence and guarded by a local army unit, was created to help women and children flee oppression in China and immigrate to Turkey.

Image six. Two Palestinian children are captured at a Gaza beach a few weeks ago. One was running away from the shore and the other one's body was strewn on the sand after being shot by an Israeli naval ship.

Image seven. Also captured recently, teary-eyed children from Gaza are crammed in the back of a truck after being displaced from their homes.

Image eight. A Palestinian child sits on a hospital bed, with his face burned and covered in white powder. He is weeping as he looks up at his mother who is beside him and also covered in white powder.

Image nine. A group of children from Myanmar (Burma) stand in a concentration camp, where they have been imprisoned for two years.

Image ten. A young man is injured on the streets of Egypt as a bulldozer moves towards him. A woman is yelling nearby, presumably pleading with the driver and pointing at the injured youth.

Image eleven. A Palestinian boy climbs the separation wall between Bethlehem and a Jewish settlement. The boy appears hesitant near the top, as he risks being shot by the guards in the towers.

These images covered my father's prison cell walls until last Wednesday. After being away from his cell all morning, my father returned to his room to change into his exercise clothes. When he entered, he was shocked to find that all eleven pictures that he had carefully collected during the past two years were not on his walls anymore. When he learned that it was the prison guards who had confiscated the images, my father asked them to return them.

That is when a guard told him they are "contraband."

"But they were newspaper clippings," my father said. Still, the guard only repeated his claim, saying that it was too late anyways; he had already shredded them.

To my father, these images were more than just anonymous faces of damage and pain. He had photocopied each image while reading the news, he had plastered them on his wall, and as months passed, every child and mother became familiar to him. They became part of his confined space, characters from his abstract community—and a loud reminder that there were still so many people in the world in need of urgent help.

At the end of his email, my father told me that he wished he'd made two copies of each photo instead of one. It's too late now, he admitted, but he reassured me that he will never forget their faces. The prison guard may have shredded the physical prints, but my father insists he could still see them and that they will forever remain imprinted in his heart. As I share his careful descriptions of them, I honor the people in these images for the world to remember.

Through my father's story, I honor him. I bring back to light his unjust imprisonment, which has only grown more punitive 13 years after 9/11. This fallout has led to a seemingly endless incarceration of my father who—in addition to remaining behind bars for his global humanitarian work—has to deal with his pictorial account being confiscated as contraband.

26 Nov - Letter from anarchists Amélie and Fallon

We recently focused a letter-writing night on comrades known as the 5E3. Two of the three recently sent the

following letter.

MORE:

We have been in prison for over 10 months now. In recent weeks they have passed two sentences on us: federal and common. On November 1 Judge Manuel Munoz Bastida of the eighth federal court of Reclusorio Sur handed down a sentence of seven and a half years' prison on charges of "Arson to a public building with people inside," this for the damage caused to the "Mexican communication and transport offices".

The "people inside" are the two federal pigs that were in charge of the security of the place. Then, on November 7, we received the second sentence for the common court charges of "damage to private property in a group" and "breach of the peace". These charges relate to the attack that occurred at the car dealership of Nissan. It being on the corner of the STC where we burned the cars.

Judge Margarita Bastida Negrete of the court of common law # 18 of Reclusorio East sentenced us to two years and seven months in prison, joining the two charges so that material damage and breach of the peace became damages of 108 000 pesos. According to the law, for all sentences of less than 5 years, first time offenders are entitled to certain benefits.

In our case, if we pay a fine of 43,000 pesos we will be released immediately or we can pay a minimum of 10,000 pesos each and sign each month to the court during the 2 years and 7 months. We shall appeal against both sentences, because the public prosecutor has appealed against the common court ruling, and we against the federal sentence. They should come to their decisions within five months. In fact it is the federal sentence that is keeping us inside here. In order to get out the federal judgment must be less than five years. So, we will see in the coming months if there is a chance to leave this place.

We have been informed of the publication of an article in the Quebec newspaper "La Presse", one of the most widely read newspapers in Quebec, by Philippe Teisceira-Lessard. We are angry about the publication of this article that talks about our case, citing in part our public letters and what our lawyer told the reporter.

We have never asked any of the mass media to spread news of our case, nor did we authorize our lawyer to communicate any information to journalists. If we have anything to communicate, we prefer to do ourselves. The mass media are enemies in the same way as the police are, the most powerful instruments of social control that exist at the present time. That said, may that asshole Philippe Lessard stop harassing our families and be clear that we have no need of his articles to discuss our situation.

So, we carry on, with strength in our hearts and shitting on justice and the State. We do not expect anything from the law, even if we really want to get out of here.

Strength to our accomplice Carlos Lopez Marin (in East), comrade Luis Fernando (South), to Abraham and Fernando (North). In addition, greetings to Mario Gonzales, now free, and a very strong hug to Felicity, Tripa and the witch.

Fire to civilization, war on society.

Until freedom and beyond!

27 Nov - A Thankful Prayer by Leonard Peltier

On the day many celebrate the genocide of American Indians and the needless slaughter of millions of turkeys, Leonard Peltier adds perspective.

MORE:

I was thinking about the national holiday "Thanksgiving" the other day. I won't even go into what a horrible shame this American holiday is based on. Instead, I will just let it remind me of the common bond I have with all my brothers and sisters of the Earth. Even if Thanksgiving, the holiday, is based on an incorrect portrayal of

history. The concept of being Thankful, is a universal truth. I mean, lets face it, being thankful/grateful has been part of Indian Nations much longer than the invention of a holiday.

I admit there are days in here when I find it very hard to be thankful, but it does not take much to bring it back for me. Most days, I get cards and letters from people all over the world, sometimes I can even smell the soil, the pines, and sometimes even fry bread in the paper that is sent to me. I hear stories of your lives, your troubles, your children, your jobs. oh there is some word for what I am trying to say but I don't remember it, but I get a sense of* life* through all of you, and I am thankful for that. I often want to reach out and help you sometimes. I would love to come work on your cars or help you build sweat lodge, or even just mow the lawn. I miss helping people and I hate asking for help, which it seems, is all I do.

In here, I am able to focus on the simple things in life. You have no idea how cool it is to just get a new pair of socks. In the last few months I have really been feeling my age, and I am so very thankful for all the support you have all given me. I won't lie, it has been a rough time lately, but I am hopeful that is changing.

My people have always had a deep and connected relationship with the Sun, and I realized the other day just how much I miss the Sun. When I had the Sun's light upon me, I felt stronger. These walls hold out the Sun's energy, and it weakens me.

When you miss something, it is easier to be thankful for things you do have.

My friend and Spiritual advisor, Lenny Foster, visited me recently, and he reminded me of some basic things I have to be thankful for. I have watched him age over all these years too, and I am thankful for him and his wisdom. He sang with me and prayed with me, and I felt a bit of the Sun again.

I guess my point is, that we can find the things we need in places we may not expect.

I can always pray, this can never be taken away from me, and through that prayer, I can keep the Sun and hope alive.

And so, on this day, "Thanksgiving," I will choose to be thankful and not to celebrate tyranny.

I also want to pray with *and for* you.

I pray for each and every one of you, whether you support me or you do not.

I pray that your lives will be full of meaning and you will find new ways to learn.

I pray for your strength and that you will always stand up for the things you know are right.

I pray that each one of you will find a way to protect our Mother Earth, she is crying out for us to hear her.

I pray that you will listen to you inner wisdom and let it guide you to make choices that will help each other, and that you will be examples for those still learning their way in this life.

I pray that you will be present with the moments you have, enjoy the simple things in life— like the Sun, The Dirt, The Air, The Water, and that you would protect them as you would your own children.

I pray that you will look for opportunities to lift up your sisters and brothers and not to bring them down.

I pray that you will grow and enjoy good natural foods.

I pray for you to savor the attention of your loved ones.

I pray for you to build productive bridges of peace with those you oppose.

I pray that when others make bad choices you help them find positive solutions.

I pray for understanding in times of misunderstanding.....

And yes, I pray very deeply and honestly that I can go home for a little while before I cross over to the Spirit World.

I am with you always, and I feel your prayers too. I am always grateful for your support, your love, your friendship, your letters and the contact you give me with LIFE.

It is harder for me to physically see well enough to write letters these days, so please forgive me if I don't write you back. It is not that I don't want to. Know that I am often sitting and thinking of you, and being thankful for all of you.

Your old, thankful friend, and brother.

30 Nov - Request From Jalil Muntaqim

NYC Jericho received the following request from Jalil.

MORE:

I am preparing the Article 78 petition to the Court, however, I am still requesting friends to call Tina Stanford, Commissioner of the Board of Parole, and urge her to reverse the parole denial due to erroneous information in the parole folder: the COMPAS Report and their receipt and review of racist letters opposing my release.

I anticipate that, if several people make these calls, perhaps they will reverse the denial and order a new hearing. I ask that you all make phone calls to Tina Stanford's office (518.473.9400) urging a decision in my administrative appeal.

... In the hopefully short term, it is expected that the NYS Court of Appeals will decide two cases on parole that could establish a precedent on future parole decisions. It is expected the Court will make their decision before the end of the year, which will, if favorable, support my arguments. We shall see!

30 Nov - Jeremy Hammond has spent a thousand days in prison for telling us the truth

Sunday, November 30, 2014, was Jeremy Hammond's 1000th day in prison.

MORE:

Jeremy is in jail for allegedly breaching the website and exposing millions of emails of the private intelligence firm Stratfor. WikiLeaks published the emails as the GI Files, revealing that they had been spying on human rights defenders at the behest of corporations and governments.

He's been transferred several times, but Jeremy is now detained in Federal Corrections Institution Manchester, in Kentucky. Since being imprisoned, Jeremy has been retaliated against in several ways, from major abuses like solitary confinement, to pettier things like delaying his mail. We've recounted the many issues he's faced here. In October, the prison threw him in solitary – for what they claim is the high crime of stealing clothes from his laundry job. There is no justification for solitary confinement, a tactic of psychological torture.

Because federal law does not include provision for parole, if Jeremy is not denied good-time credits, he could be released on Christmas Day, 2020.

There are many ways you can help Jeremy — you can lift his spirits by writing him a letter or sending him a book (when he's in solitary, he gets no possessions and only one book at a time), and by donating to his fund you can boost his commissary, which allows him to buy things in prison. It also allows us to maintain the website, where we publish his writings from prison and keep you apprised of his condition. Here are the top five ways to help Jeremy today.

1 Dec - Eddie Africa Again Denied Parole

We recently found out that for a record seventh time now our Brother Eddie Africa was denied parole by the Pennsylvania Parole Board.

MORE:

As usual The Parole Board stated the issue of Eddie not showing remorse for a crime that he and other Move Members are innocent of. They stated the fact that Eddie did not take responsibility for a crime that he and other Move Members are innocent of. At this point the nature of the crime is not the issue because you can look no

further than the late Trial Judge Edwin Malmed who the day After giving Move Members 30-100 years in prison stated that he had the faintest idea Who murdered Officer James Ramp was sending Move Members to prison based on The fact that they are Move Members and not for the murder of Officer James Ramp.

This system and it's officials say that it's time for Move People to Move Past The Bombing and murder of Move Members on May 13th 1985 but this system and it's parole board has not applied this to August 1978 and the murder of Officer James Ramp which they are using as an excuse to keep committed Move Members in prison. The Parole Board took almost two months to deliver a decision that was already made by The Fraternal Order of Police and Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams and dictated to newly appointed Parole Board Chairman Lloyd White a former Police Officer Himself . All of these parties are working together to ensure that The Move 9 remain in prison for life. Even The Warden of SCI Mahanoy where Eddie is at gave him a negative recommendation for parole.

People should be outraged by this people who stood up and fought for all of life to be free are being unjustly imprisoned while the people that killed Michael Brown, Sean Bell, Eric Garner, 11 Move Members from 1985, all walk the street . When do you say Enough is Enough we are fed up and you should be too. We want people to continue calling The Parole Board and continue questioning them about the unjust imprisonment of The Move 9. The Parole Board can be reached at 717.772.4343 call these misfits and let your voices be heard about the issue of The Move 9 being held hostage in Pennsylvania Prisons.

2 Dec - New writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal

We're including transcripts of Mumia's latest commentaries.

MORE:

December 2nd - The Politics of Betrayal

The recent election, the 2014 midterms, should neither be forgotten nor dismissed.

They should be studied and remembered, for there are lessons to be learned there.

While it was doubtless a wipeout for Democratic candidates, snatching from them their last grasp of legislative power, it was also a lesson on how little millions of people care about politics. For, percentage-wise, the 2014 midterms came in as the lowest voter turnout since the early 1940s, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was President, and during World War II.

And what made 2014 distinctive was that many Democratic candidates were running away from President Barack Obama, as if he had Ebola.

Many of these legislators were so-called 'Blue Dog' Democrats (or political conservatives), who tried to attract some conservative love for turning their backs on Obama. (It didn't help; most of them got crushed anyway).

It might also be noted that Obama himself turned his back on his natural constituency - Black folks - reasoning that Black voters may be pissed, but there's really nowhere else to go.

So millions of them sat this one out, a silent non-vote of mass disapproval with the state of Black life in 2014 America.

Democratic talking heads began trying to make last-minute appeals to Black voters; but it seemed too little, too late.

Similarly, Black issues are not on the legislative calendar, for politicians run from that, just as they ran from Obama.

Why? Because liberals fear white backlash-they want Black votes, but afterwards, Blacks (and their issues), are forgotten.

‘Till next time.

Why support a party that runs from you?

Why support a party that doesn't support you?

Questions from the 2014 elections (perhaps by the next time, we'll have answers)

December 3rd - Ferguson

Like a fever, the news broke, but, unlike a fever, it brought no relief.

For the news, from the perspective of the national Black community wasn't good.

The 12-member grand jury in Ferguson, investigating the killing of a Black teenager, Mike Brown, returned with 'no true bill': legalese for no charges; no indictment.

No case.

Despite the fact that Brown was unarmed.

No charge.

The name Ferguson joins an ancient line of place-names of pain, loss and Black death. Places like Birmingham, Tulsa, Selma, St. Louis, New York, Philadelphia, and now—Ferguson.

It will have a meaning all its own.

For young people, many of whom are new to activism, who felt compelled to hit the streets in protest of unbridled police power – and legalized impunity, the challenge will be how to continue; how to fight on – and even what the fight is.

Some, broken-hearted, will flee this ugly episode, and try (perhaps unsuccessfully) to seal such a memory away.

Others will grow in radicalism, convinced that this case is the very epitome of racist injustice.

But, Ferguson may prove a turning point; a point in time when the nation chose the wrong road ahead.

December 4th - Albert Woodfox: Survivor of State Torture

His name is Albert Woodfox, but unless you're deep into Black History, I bet it'll mean little to nothing to you.

Perhaps it sounds familiar; "Albert Woodfox." "Albert Woodfox." Hmm....." oh! Oh!!" -- the Angola 3, right?"

Well, right. That's it.

Albert Woodfox is the last member of the Angola 3 - three Black men, most of whom have spent 3 or 4 decades - decades! -- In solitary confinement in Angola Prison - held on a false and illegal conviction -- made even more so by a ruling days ago tossing Woodfox's conviction.

Albert Woodfox spent 42 years - 42 years! - In solitary for the crime of 'Black Pantherism' -- and the sin of Black resistance.

All 3 men, Robert Hillary King, Herman 'Hooks' Wallace, and Albert Woodfox, were framed for the 1972 killing of a white guard, Brent Miller. King, who wasn't even at the prison at the time of the killing, spent 29 years in solitary before being released. Wallace was held until Oct. 2011, when his conviction was overturned - he died 3 days into his freedom (of cancer); Woodfox, after 42 years in 'the hole', has now had his conviction

reversed.

Juan Mendez, United Nations Special Rapporteur of Torture, found any length of time over 14 days in solitary, constituted torture under International law. 14 days.

Woodfox spent 42 years!

This is a medieval system - new age slave plantations, where Black life is shredded by the razor wires of legality.

Today, he is still not free; but he's on the road to Freedom.

December 4th - Rule of Law

In the ashy aftermath of Ferguson, Missouri, after over 170+ US cities faced spirited and sometimes violent protests, it was disturbing in the extreme to hear President Barack Obama come out and call for respect for the 'Rule of Law.'

In his case, it was particularly ironic given the fact that when he was born, it was at a time when the very marriage of his mother and father (a white person and a Black person) was a crime in several dozen states.

Indeed, it was only in 1867, in the Loving v. Virginia case, that the laws against interracial marriage (at the time the law in some 16 states) were struck down.

At the time, Obama was a 6 year old boy. In some parts of the U.S. his very birth was a crime. Interracial marriage was against the law in roughly a third of the United States, and in these states, wasn't that the 'rule of law'?

For law can be just or unjust.

Dr. Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, said, 'The law must serve men; not men serve the law'.

John Africa, founder of the MOVE Organization, said, "Just because it's legal doesn't make it right."

The Rule of Law, in a nation that legally enslaved Africans for centuries, that exploited, raped, lynched and disfranchised Black folks, legally, means different things to different people.

We readily forget that the Holocaust in Germany against Jews, Romani, Sinti and Poles were legal.

Apartheid in South Africa was legal.

'Stop & Frisk', until quite recently, was perfectly legal.

All were allowable under the 'Rule of Law'.

It took long, bitter and sometimes violent protest to bring these injustices to light – and begin to change them.

The late Dr. Nelson Mandela was, we forget, a lawyer. But he became the head of the ANC's (African National Congress), military wing to fight against the unjust system of apartheid.

He knew, intimately, about the 'Rule of Law' – that's why he fought it so relentlessly, by armed struggle.

He knew, then, the keen limits of the 'rule of law'.

December 4th - Ferguson Fallout

Protests in over 170 cities; demonstrations during dozens of Black Friday sales, with demands to not spend Black America's money on mindless materialism, while millions mourn.

The police killing of teenaged Mike Brown, and the subsequent whitewash by a prosecutor's state grand jury, has touched a raw nerve among young Black America and beyond.

The question is, what is next?

Already, media and government are trying to manage this event, by its calls for closure, and hints that (maybe!) relief may lie with federal officials.

Most know that these are mere pipe dreams.

Soft words meant to ease back into a deadly status quo of 'business as usual'.

But any system that kills children, is a system that can't be allowed to exist.

With tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands, (if not millions) in a state of outrage, now is the time to organize them into organizations designed and committed to fight for deep, structural social change.

The system that allows its agents to kill kids with utter impunity must be shattered, and new, humanistic structures-ones controlled by the people, must be erected in its place.

This energy; this Moment, must not be allowed to dissipate.

It must be seized. It must be harnessed.

It must be used to build new ways of being in the world.

This will take will. It will take vision.

But, most of all, it will take commitment to fight – and struggle – until social change becomes a reality.

December 4th - The Glory of Youth

Ferguson, Missouri has been the project of the grassroots of the youth, not just of Ferguson, but of many communities.

They have stood up to automatic weapons, to a hostile media, to their critical elders- and to an unresponsive federal government.

They have stood in the torrid heat, and the frozen snow.

They stand today in over 100 cities.

Yet, they stand.

They are not all Black, yet most are youth – and their passion, joined with their will, are re-writing history.

They are unwilling to stop, for the forces they are facing are unwilling to stop.

Their splendid example is radiating around the world, touching minds and souls in Paris, in London, in Havana, in Lagos, in Rio – and beyond.

They are standing.

They are standing still.

December 5th - “Operation Restore Trust?”

The flames of Ferguson have eaten their fill, and its eerie glow has cast light on how impotent are the Black political class, who cannot solve a problem that is a bane of Black existence.

Usually, when they speak, they seem to be ventriloquists, who mouth the words of white politicians, drowning the deep concerns of their constituents in an ocean of empty words.

Now, a collection of prominent officials have announced their intention to seriously tackle the issue of police abuse in Black communities, from the U.S. president on down.

Politicians, police officials, clergy, and community organizers are part of a coterie of people who have come together to restore trust between cops and the African-American community.

When I saw [on TV] this reference, my head swiveled.

“Restore trust?”

We wonder when was there ever trust in the first place?

The cruel, painful history of relations between police and the people is one of predation – not trust.

Notably, black police officers are part of this discussion, but are we to make note of the fact that, throughout many communities, over many years, they were forbidden to arrest white people?

Police are stationed in Black neighborhoods not to ‘serve and protect’ Black people, nor their property.

They are there to control Black mobility, and to discipline Blacks for fear they’ll pose a threat to white wealth, life or property. Period.

That’s real talk – not these phony fairy-tale discussions about ‘restoring trust.’

For what trust can exist between the oppressors and the oppressed?

Nor can body-cams be the great solution that its supporters propose.

Recall that cameras caught, with crystal clarity, the brutal cop beatings of Rodney King in LA, and before him, Delbert Africa in Philadelphia.

Despite these captures on camera, both cases were thrown out; one by a jury; another by a judge.

So much for cameras, huh?

Who can trust a force that killed Black Panther leader, Fred Hampton, in his sleep?

Who can trust an agency that bombed babies – Black MOVE babies –in Philadelphia in 1985?

How can you restore something that never existed?

Until systems change, until cops aren’t the only ones who face grand juries, until they too, can be sent to Death Row for killing children, talk about ‘restoring trust’ is just that: talk.

December 7th - The U.S. Prison Industry –‘Neo-Slavery’

[Book Review: *Slaves of the State: Black Incarceration from the Chain Gang to the Penitentiary* by Dennis Childs {University of Minnesota Press: forthcoming spring, 2015}]

Ask any historian, activist or scholar about the origins of the American prison system and they'll confidently reply the Walnut Street Jail, nineteenth century, Philadelphia.

One scholar, literature professor, Dennis Childs, will say, "No", adding, "That's not it".

And when you ask him for more, he'll tell you that prisons began in America alright, but it wasn't in Philadelphia. It began as slave ships, sailing prisons for Africans, chained for days, weeks, months on end, in their rancid stifling holds, en-route to Philadelphia, Rhode Island, Rio de Janeiro, Havana, Jamaica, Charleston and beyond.

What sparked Childs' thinking was an article he read years ago as a graduate student by scholar/activist Dr. Angela Davis, entitled "Racialized Punishment and Prison Abolition", in which she noted that "[T]he institution of slavery, "[was} "itself a form of incarceration."

That powerful insight has moved Prof. Childs to pen a book, *Slaves of the State: Black Incarceration from the Chain Gang to the Penitentiary*, in which he examines the deep roots and startling continuities between these two repressive institutions – and why they remain so popular in the [white] American mind.

For slavery, like the Prison Industrial Complex, was a monstrosly lucrative business. He illustrates how names have changed over time, but deep, abiding realities and relationships remain.

A prison, he argues, is a slave ship run aground, and prisoners? "Neo-slaves."

He devotes much of his text to Angola in Louisiana.

The name itself is of an ancient African kingdom, from whence millions of Blacks were captured centuries ago.

Today, one of the biggest prisons in America (Angola), a former mass plantation during the slavery era, looks an awful lot like one today. Chains, shackles, whips, rifles and repression, where thousands of dark men labor on land under an unremitting sun.

Childs has written a deeply moving and intricately researched book, which weaves novels and memory, the past and the present, ancient artifacts and modern tools of repression, to reveal an unwelcome truth about modern-day America, and the biggest prison system on earth.

Childs shows us how the past isn't really past at all.

4 Dec - Brent Betterly Returned to Illinois

Brent Betterly has arrived back to Sheridan Prison in Illinois after another gruesome and dangerous extradition from Florida.

MORE:

Please write him, send him a card, book, magazine, or zine to get him through the rest of his sentence until the spring:

Brent Betterly M44724

Sheridan Correctional Center

4017 East 2603 Road

Sheridan, Illinois 60551

5 Dec - COINTELPRO appeal dismissed by Nebraska Supreme Court without opinion

The Nebraska Supreme Court dismissed, without opinion, the post-conviction appeal of COINTELPRO target

Mondo we Langa on September 26.

MORE:

by Michael Richardson (*The Examiner*)

Mondo, former David Rice, was not given a hearing or even a written decision by the state high court. The perfunctory dismissal notice issued by the court only stated Mondo's appeal was "time barred."

Mondo we Langa and Edward Poindexter, now known as the Omaha Two, are serving life sentences at the Nebraska State Penitentiary for the 1970 murder of Omaha police officer Larry Minard, Sr. The two men were subjects of the infamous COINTELPRO counterintelligence operation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Director J. Edgar Hoover ordered an exculpatory FBI Laboratory report to be withheld from the jury that convicted the two Black Panther leaders.

The controversial trial put the two men at the mercy of inexperienced lawyers, an agent of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division bent on conviction, the FBI's withheld evidence, hostile police officers with conflicting testimony, an alleged sleeping jury foreman, and a teenage killer looking for a way out of trouble.

Both Poindexter and Mondo filed an appeal with the Nebraska Supreme Court after their April 17, 1971 conviction which upheld the verdict against them. Mondo then filed an appeal in U.S. District Court and after an evidentiary hearing, Judge Warren Urbom ordered Mondo released or granted a new trial. Urbom tossed out dynamite evidence against Mondo after an improper search of his home. Two different Omaha police detectives, Jack Swanson and Robert Pfeffer, have claimed they found dynamite in Mondo's basement contradicting each other. With conflicted testimony Pfeffer backed up Swanson's account at trial but changed his story after Swanson's death to claim credit for the purported discovery.

Prosecutors appealed Judge Urbom's order and the Eighth Circuit U. S. Court of Appeals reviewed the matter. A three judge federal panel upheld the District Court decision and commended Judge Urbom's careful analysis of the case again ordering that Mondo be released or retried.

Prosecutors then appealed the Eighth Circuit ruling and the case went to the U. S. Supreme Court. Chief Justice Warren Burger, eager to make his own stamp on the court, consolidated Mondo's case with a California murder case and returned the matter to state court in the landmark *Stone v. Powell* decision on procedural grounds. The Supreme Court did not consider Mondo's case on the merits but instead retroactively applied a new restriction on prisoner appeals.

In a sharp dissent to sending Mondo back to state court, Justice William Brennan wrote of the "Nebraska Supreme Court's distortion of the Fourth Amendment in an emotionally charged case."

Brennan wrote, "Even more violative of constitutional safeguards is the manner in which the Nebraska courts dealt with the merits in respondent Rice's case. Indeed, the manner in which Fourth Amendment principles were applied in the Nebraska Supreme Court is paradigmatic of Congress' concern respecting attempts by state courts to structure Fourth Amendment jurisprudence so as not to upset convictions of the "guilty" or the "unworthy."

When Mondo returned to the Nebraska Supreme Court, as directed by the Supreme Court, he was told he had exhausted his appeal time while in federal court. Mondo we Langa never got the new trial that four federal judges said he was entitled to receive.

In 2012, Mondo filed for post-conviction relief and his case was assigned to Douglas County District Judge James Gleason. After a year of waiting, Mondo was turned down by Gleason in part because he supposedly did not claim to be innocent. Somehow Gleason overlooked or ignored Mondo's claim of innocence authored by attorney Timothy Ashford.

"Defendant Rice [Mondo] is entitled to a new trial because he did not commit the crime charged and he is not guilty of the crime leading to the death of Officer Minard in 1970, and further, the defendant's presumption of

innocence was lost as a result of the errors alleged herein.”

The current “time barred” ruling comes after years of revelations about the case. The lodestone that pointed at J. Edgar Hoover was a memorandum to Ivan Willard Conrad, the director of the FBI Laboratory, to not make a formal laboratory report on the identity of the anonymous 911 caller that lured Larry Minard to his death. Omaha Deputy Chief Glen Gates had sent a recording made by the operator of the caller’s voice to the FBI for analysis. Conrad spoke by phone to Hoover about the unusual request and Hoover ordered Conrad to follow the directive and issue no report.

The information about COINTELPRO manipulation of the trial by withholding evidence was not available to the Nebraska Supreme Court at the time of Mondo’s first appeal. Those dirty secrets only came to light years later after hard-fought litigation effort.

The number of important post-conviction issues raised by Mondo would seem enough to open the courtroom door had the Nebraska Supreme Court been guided by a search for truth. With no opinion, one is left to speculate the court’s rationale. One of the issues addressed in Mondo’s appeal brief, written by Omaha attorney Timothy Ashford, was timeliness of the appeal. Thus, even a dismissal only for that reason merits an explanation by the court.

Mondo we Langa’s next legal step being contemplated by Ashford is an appeal to the U.S. District court to take advantage of a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling allowing appeals like Mondo’s in cases alleging ineffective counsel. Nebraska’s “time barred” ruling, without opinion, is the judicial equivalent of thumbing one’s nose at the Supreme Court.

Mondo’s case, standing at the state-federal divide, gave rise to *Stone v. Powell* and limited legal actions by innumerable state prisoners nationwide under the theory the state courts would treat them fairly. In light of the injustice done to Mondo, an improper search of his home, retroactive application of appeal restrictions, denial of a new trial ordered by four federal judges, the first timeliness denial by the Nebraska Supreme Court, and now the new “time barred” without opinion dismissal, it is time to revisit *Stone v. Powell*.

The United States is to undergo a review by the United Nations next spring over its compliance with human rights treaties. A multi-year effort led by Efia Nwangaza of the Malcolm X Center for Self-Determination to include the plight of COINTELPRO targets and other political cases in the Universal Periodic Review has moved the Omaha Two case into an international political arena. The Obama administration will be asked what it has done to ameliorate the injustices done in state courts. The Nebraska Supreme Court’s no opinion dismissal will leave President Obama with some explaining to do.

8 Dec - Prison phone reform: Take action

From Kevin Olliff’s support crew comes this action to help Kevin and all prisoners as well as a brief update on his case.

MORE:

Here’s an issue that affects Kevin – and all US prisoners – directly.

Besides letters, Kevin’s primary lifeline to the outside is phone calls. And they are expensive.

Recently, the FCC enacted one form of prison phone reform, forcing providers to reduce their rate by 25% to 50%. This had a huge impact on Kevin’s expenses for out of state calls.

Now, the FCC is considering a follow-up reform. This would apply the same rate reductions to intrastate calls, allowing prisoners to call friends and family members in the same state at a reduced rate.

Kevin passed along that this is an issue that is important to him, and is asking his supporters to submit comment in support of this reform to the FCC.

Step one:

Go to <http://nationinside.org/campaign/prison-phone-justice>

Step two:

Click the “Take Action” tab

(this link is specially coded to prevent submission fraud, preventing us from giving the direct link)

Thanks for taking this small action to help prisoners.

December 8th - Three brief updates on Kevin & Tyler’s case

1. Government granted extension to reply to Animal Enterprise Terrorism challenge

This week, prosecutors were granted an extension to reply to a motion filed by Kevin’s attorneys to void the Animal Enterprise Terrorism charges on Constitutional grounds. They now have until December 31st to respond.

2. A terrorism expert from Georgetown University was granted a request to file an amicus brief on behalf of Kevin & Tyler. Her brief was subsequently rejected by the judge.

3. After the government announced they were looking into activity on two cell phones confiscated from the vehicle at the time of Kevin & Tyler’s arrest, recently the government has announced they are seeking a warrant to identify activity on a third phone they believe belongs to Tyler Lang. The government is seeking to learn information on phones called by this third phone from the vehicle.

12 Dec - Illusions on Fire: the Ferguson Rebellion and the Coming Movement in NYC

WHAT: Strategic Discussion

WHEN: 7:00-9:30pm, Friday, December 12th

WHERE: The Base - 1302 Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn, New York

COST: Free, but donations appreciated

MORE:

“Burn it down!” was the cry of Mike Brown’s stepdad, Louis, when he learned the pig Darren Wilson wouldn’t be indicted for the murder of his son. His cry was also a call, for those us who are sick of this shit. For many of us, “burn it down” is the only reasonable response to a system that stands for white supremacy, exploitation, oppression and death. We answered this call by rising up together over the past weeks: taking streets, bridges, roads, and highways, and seizing or wrecking the meaningless property that police and the ruling class value more than black and brown life.

It’s not only QuikTrips and dumpsters that are on fire. Many of us find the hope we once had in the system, in reforming or transforming it, is also up in flames. And now we need to work together, through the smoke, to organize and build a movement. Not only against the cops and their violence, but also against the politicians and non-profits that seek to co-opt our efforts and channel us back into the capitalist state, rotten to the core.

Join members of the Trayvon Martin Organizing Committee, Black Rose, the Brooklyn Solidarity Network, Take Back the Bronx, The Base, and Unity & Struggle for a discussion about justice, the police state, and revolution. We’ll present on several different projects going on in the city, socialize, and think through the possibilities of the present moment.

14 Dec - Send Love Through the Walls 2014

WHAT: Send Love Through The Walls Holiday Card-Writing For Political Prisoners

WHEN: 2:00-6:00pm, Sunday, December 14th, 2014

WHERE: 263 Eastern Parkway, Apartment 5D (Direction Below) phone: 718.783.8141

COST: FREE (Donations to cover the cost of stamps greatly appreciated)

MORE:

In what many prisoners have told us is their favorite event of the year, Resistance in Brooklyn and NYC Anarchist Black Cross again join forces to bring you the annual holiday card-writing party for U.S. held political prisoners, prisoners of war, and prisoners of conscience. This event is always a lot of fun, the food outstanding, the camaraderie lively, and the handmade cards flat out amazing. This year will be no different. So plan to bring your friends, your creativity, and a healthy appetite. We'll have updates on the pp/pow campaigns as well as paints, markers, crayons, and envelopes. We will also be holding a raffle to support soon to be released, 87 year old Mohaman Koti.

If you've been looking for a place to purchase the "Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar," NYC ABC will have them for sale at the event. The calendar is a joint fundraising and educational project between outside organizers in Montreal and Toronto, and three political prisoners being held in maximum-security prisons in New York State: David Gilbert, Robert Seth Hayes and Herman Bell. The proceeds from Certain Days 2015 will be divided among The New York State Task Force on Political Prisoners, Addameer, and 4strugglemag. For more information, be sure to visit certaindays.org

Directions:

Getting to 263 Eastern Parkway is simple:

From the 2/3/4/5 or Franklin Avenue Shuttle:

Franklin Avenue Stop: Walk west on Eastern Parkway (away from Franklin Avenue, toward Classon Avenue).

We're about half a block down on the north side of the street. When you go into the building, take the elevator to your left.

For more information, contact:

Resistance in Brooklyn– [resistanceinbrooklyn07 at gmail dot com](mailto:resistanceinbrooklyn07@gmail.com)

NYC Anarchist Black Cross– [nycabc at riseup dot net](mailto:nycabc@riseup.net)

31 Dec - Noise Demo Against the Prison Industrial Complex, In Solidarity with PPs and POWs

WHAT: Noise Demo Against the PIC, for the Liberation of PPs + POWs

WHEN: 9:00pm, Wednesday, December 31st

WHERE: Metropolitan Correction Center (MCC, the federal prison in downtown Manhattan); Pearl Street, between Cardinal Hayes Place and Park Row (J to Chambers Street or 4/5/6/ to City Hall)

BRING: Noisemakers, air horns, drums, anything that is loud!

MORE:

On the noisiest night of the year in New York City, come help us remind folks locked up that they are not alone. NYC Anarchist Black Cross, in response to an international call for noise demonstrations outside of prisons, is asking folks to join us outside of the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in lower Manhattan. Come, not to appeal to authority, speak truth to power, or any other contrivance, but rather to stand arm in arm with comrades and show direct solidarity to those on the other side of the wall.

The state, writ large, is targeting anarchists all across the United States and abroad. This will be both protest and celebration. Let's make it another night in which we show them we're never scared.