



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for January 19th

7 Jan - Important Leonard Peltier Update

Leonard Peltier has an abdominal aortic aneurism and needs your support now more than ever.

MORE:

January 7th - Health Crisis

We received a message from Leonard this evening. An excerpt follows.

“For months, if not at least a year now, I have been complaining about medical problems and that something is wrong with me... For the last few days, I have been on call out to go see the doctor. Today, I was called again and had my blood pressure taken and gave more blood for more tests. Apparently, they found what’s called Abdominal Aortic Aneurism (AAA) and it is at a very dangerous [stage]. If it bursts I can die. I will bleed to death. So they are going to rush me through some more tests, a MRI on Sunday, then find the right surgeon to do the operation. The good news is [this surgery] has a high success rate... if nothing goes wrong.”

At this time, we have no further details. Suffice it to say that, at Leonard’s age, any surgery is risky. Also a concern is that during his treatment at a federal prison medical center, Leonard will be held in isolation.

Please visit <http://www.bop.gov/inmates/concerns.jsp>. Make reference to **Leonard Peltier #89637-132** and **USP Coleman I**. Voice your concern about Leonard’s medical treatment, and let the federal Bureau of Prisons know that the world is watching. We demand that Leonard receive the best possible care.

Please also contact:

Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street, NW
Washington, DC 20534
202.307.3198
info@bop.gov

In addition, when you make your call to the White House, 202.456.1111 – 9AM-5PM (as we know you often do) to voice your support for a grant of clemency, please mention Leonard’s current health crisis. Mr. Obama must act now.

Leonard and the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee thank you for your support – in particular during this critical time.

We’ll keep you informed of any developments.

January 10th - Leonard Peltier Health Update

We promised to provide updates in relation to Leonard Peltier's current health crisis.

Today, Leonard had a MRI which confirmed the physician's initial diagnosis. The test results (as to size and location of the aneurysm) will be reviewed by physicians who will consult with Leonard as to the best course of action.

Do remember that Leonard is dealing with a bureaucracy like no other. It is our job to keep the pressure on the federal Bureau of Prisons to ensure that he gets timely and quality health care.

As you have perhaps discovered for yourself, for some time now the BOP has put a series of road blocks in the way of supporters when it comes to easily advocating for Leonard. This means that you should consider sending a letter by snail mail. But to get a letter to the BOP quickly, visit:

<https://faxzero.com> (US) or <https://faxzero.com/international> (International).

Send a letter via fax to each of the below elements of the BOP:

Warden Tamyra Jarvis
USP Coleman I
846 NE 54th Terrace
Sumterville, Florida 33521
Fax: 352.689.6012

Helen J. Marberry
RO Southeast Regional Office
3800 Camp Creek Parkway SW
Building 2000
Atlanta, Georgia 30331
Fax: 678.686.1229

Office of the Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First Street, NW
Washington, DC 20534
Fax: 202.514.6620

Be respectful, but firm. The situation is life threatening and Leonard is counting on us.

Again, thank you for all you do on behalf of Leonard Peltier.

January 10th - Leonard Peltier's Serious Illness Sparks Renewed Effort for Presidential Clemency
by Levi Rickert (*Native News*)

COLEMAN, FLORIDA — News out of the U.S. Penitentiary in Coleman, Florida that Leonard Peliter (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians) is in need of surgery for an abdominal aortic aneurism has renewed a call for presidential clemency by President Barak Obama.

Abdominal aortic aneurisms are dangerous and serious medical conditions.

While more information will be known today about Peltier's current medical crisis after a MRI is performed, the the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (ILPDC) feels Peltier, who turned 70 last September 12, deserves to spend the remainder of is life a free man.

Peltier has been incarcerated for the past 40 years for the killing of two FBI agents at Oglala on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in 1975. Many legal experts maintain many parts of the United States' case against were false and he did not receive a fair trial.

In a statement to Native News Online on Saturday, January 9, 2016, International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee writes:

“The ILPDC requests that all individuals, groups, and organizations dedicate themselves to working in support of clemency for Leonard Peltier by continuing to call, write and email the White House to voice support for his immediate release.

Many feel that should Leonard die in prison he will become a martyr and this will have significant negative impacts on the gains made in improving the relationship between President Obama’s administration and Tribal Nations.”

Lenny Foster (Diné), who has served as Peltier’s spiritual advisor for decades says:

“He is eligible for release on executive clemency. He has spent the last 40 years in federal prisons and too many questions remain. He was not the shooter. Many witnesses were threatened, some were coerced into providing false testimony, evidence was fabricated and he did not receive a fair trial.

We need to support the executive clemency for Leonard Peltier. He is not in the best of health and he needs to be released by President Obama so he can go home and spend his remaining days with his family, friends and grandchildren and great grandchildren.”

“Measures of reconciliation should include efforts to identify and heal particular sources of open wounds....new or renewed consideration should be given to clemency for Leonard Peltier,” stated then UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya in a 2012 report.

Interested parties can make phone calls to the White House and write letters of support for executive clemency.

The International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee also stated:

“We further urge everyone to contact the Bureau of Prisons requesting immediate medical attention continue. We hope to have more news on Leonard’s condition soon.

Please visit <http://www.bop.gov/inmates/concerns.jsp>. Make reference to Leonard Peltier #89637-132 and USP Coleman I. Voice your concern about Leonard’s medical treatment, and let the federal Bureau of Prisons know that the world is watching. We demand that Leonard receive the best possible care.”

February 6th - International Day of Solidarity With Leonard Peltier

WHAT: Day of Solidarity

WHEN: 2:00-5:00pm, Saturday, February 6

WHERE: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Labor Center - 310 West 43rd Street New York, New York

COST: Suggested donation: \$5-10; no one turned away due to lack of funds

MORE:

Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier's only hope for freedom is Executive Clemency from the President of the United States. Since President Obama will be leaving office in less than a year, the coming months are crucial in the fight for Leonard's freedom. Please join us for this important event in that fight.

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

MARTIN GARBUS, prominent trial lawyer and head of Leonard's legal team. Mr. Garbus represented Peter Matthiessen and Viking Press in the successful battle to publish *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*. He was also an attorney for Gerardo Hernández, one of the now free Cuban Five.

CYNTHIA K. DUNNE, a former Federal Prosecutor who advocates for Leonard's freedom. Now a director of Lakota Children's Enrichment, a nonprofit corporation at Pine Ridge Reservation, Ms. Dunne has stated "It is now time for President Obama to grant Clemency to Leonard Peltier."

FEATURED PERFORMERS:

FRANK MENUSAN (Muskogee) Native Flute

LAURA ORTMAN (White Mountain Apache) Instrumentalist

RED STORM DRUM AND DANCE TROUPE

There will be a statement from Leonard himself, as well as updates and announcements about: Mumia Abu-Jamal, The Move 9, Oscar Lopez Rivera and Palestinian Political Prisoners, among others.

Light refreshments will be served.

Sponsors: NYC Free Peltier, NYC Jericho, ProLibertad

For more information: NYC Free Peltier - nycfreepeltier@gmail.com 646.429.2059

7 Jan - Mumia Event and Recent Commentaries

We've included the latest commentaries by Mumia Abu-Jamal and an upcoming report back event regarding his recent court appearance.

MORE:

January 7th - WHEN A CHILD DIES.....

NEWS BREAK: Cleveland officials announce no charges to be filed in the police killing of 12-year old Tamir Rice.

There is something shattering about the death -the killing - of a child.

When a child dies, the natural order is torn; the stars weep, and the earth quakes.

We have become so accustomed to this system that we suppose it is natural, instead of a human imposition. Politicians, in the pocket of so-called police unions, bow before bags of silver, and blink away the death of a child; especially if a Black child.

What man-made institution is more precious than a child?

What job?

What so-called profession?

What office?

What state?

When a child dies, adults don't deserve to breathe their stolen air.

When a child dies, the living must not rest until they have purged the poison that dared harm such a one.

When a child dies, time runs backward and attempts to right such a wrong.

This should inspire movements worldwide, to fight like never before.

For something vile has happened before our eyes.

A child has been killed; and in America, because it's a Black child, it means next to nothing.

January 7th - "UNFORGETTABLE": Natalie Cole (1950-2015)

Her voice, rippling like warm lake water, has been moving through my memory for hours now, ever since I heard of her shocking passing.

How many hours had I enjoyed her playful, enchanting, enthralling alto, contralto, her soprano peaks? Countless. How many times had I stared at her photos, emblazoned on album covers, a beaming smile in a pecan-colored face, caught in a moment on sun-touched beauty, her eyes ablaze like a laughing lioness?

Natalie Cole. "Unforgettable" --yes. But also, unbelievable.

When she, the daughter of the dazzling dark crooner, Nat King Cole, was able to sing a duet with her long-dead father, a thing of magic and beauty was born. Daughter and Father, joined across time; "Unforgettable." It won her a Grammy in 2008, but, more importantly, it won the hearts of millions to hear the two united in song. "This Will Be", and "Our Love", were some of her biggest hits.

Natalie Cole suffered for years from Hepatitis C, and its side effects. She even had a liver transplant.

Her remarkable voice will now, like her fathers, echo through time.

Natalie Cole, "Unforgettable Still", joins the ancestors, after 65 winters in America.

January 14th - The Genius of Huey P. Newton

To those of us who were alive - and sentient, the name Huey P. Newton evokes an era of mass resistance, of Black popular protest and of the rise of revolutionary organizations across the land.

To those of subsequent eras, youth in their 20s, the name is largely unknown, as is the name of its greatest creation: The Black Panther Party.

To those of us now known as 'old heads' and elders, such a transition from then to now seems almost unimaginable, but alas, looking out into the present is proof positive that the old saying, "History is written by the victors", has more than a grain of truth to it.

History, it seems, is many things, but kind to the oppressed, it is not.

It never has been.

It is up to the oppressed, of every generation, to plumb the depths of history, and to excavate the ore of understanding, to teach us, not what happened yesterday, but to teach us why today is like it is, so that we may learn ideas to change it.

For history belongs not so much to those who have lived it, but more so to those who have inherited it.

It is in that spirit that we examine the life of Huey P. Newton.

Huey Percy Newton was born in Louisiana in 1942, named for the populist LA Governor, Huey Pierce Long (1893-1935); know in the state as "The Kingfish".

Like many Blacks in California, Huey would carry the rhythms of the South in his speech, and when nervous, it would rise to a disconcerting twang. Perhaps this accounted for his self-consciousness, his wariness of speaking in public.

His family, like tens of thousands of others, formed the last legs of the Great Migration, of Black flight from the Apartheid South to the North and the West.

He would enter the streets of Oakland, a slender, short, beautiful boy, and the prospect terrified him. For while his father thought the name Huey was a respectful tribute to a gifted politician, to the hard, urban streets of Oakland, it was an invitation to an ass-whipping.

A scared boy does what's been done since the dawn of human time. He tells an older brother. Walter schooled him to attack the biggest guy in the pack, and how to prevail. Keyed by his fear, Huey would follow these directions explicitly.

He would throw his fear of the biggest guy in the bunch, in the form of his fists, for big brother Walter taught him that the biggest guy often had the biggest fear - bigger than his own. He also learned that the best defense was often a stiff offense.

The English poet, William Wordsworth (1770- 1850) wrote, "The child is father of the man". Lessons learned in beardless youth became the matrix of the man he became.

In describing his thinking at the time, Elaine Brown, his lover and political comrade, quoted him as saying: Every blood on that street was a potential threat, unless I knew he was a friend. After my first fights though, I recognized that they bled like me....by the time I became a teenager, I was challenging the first fool that looked at me wrong, and walking around with an ice pick in a paper bag. (Brown 252)

As a direct consequence of these street battles, the young Newton boy earns a rather unflattering nickname: "Crazy Huey". One can almost hear this Greek chorus, whispered with a mix of fear and fascination: 'Who that boy?' "Who you talkin' bout?", "That pretty boy, right there!" "Oh - don't mess with him -- that's Crazy Huey."

Thus, from his earliest youth, until adulthood, Newton was in a war footing. How could this not mold the man?

He was also a petty thief who took, to say the least, an unusual path to perfect his craft. To succeed as a thief, Newton studied the California crimes code! He would later write:

I first studied law to become a better burglar. Figuring I might get busted at any time and wanting to be ready when it happened, I bought some books on criminal law and burglary and felony and looked up as much as possible. I tried to find out what kind of evidence they needed, what things were actually considered violations of the law, what the loopholes were, and what you could do to avoid being charged at all. They had a law for everything. I studied the California Penal Code and books like California Criminal Evidence and California criminal Law by Frick and Alarcon, concentrating on those areas that were somewhat vague (Newton 25)

Newton sought such vague laws because they could more easily be overturned as void for vagueness.

Such street and legal study experiences would prove valuable in the years to come, for this was the early to middle '60s, a time of emergent and roiling social discontent and upheaval.

Rosa Parks and Rev. Martin L. King were names known in Black communities nationwide. Black students kicked of 1960 by sit-ins at lunch counters in the South that evoked ugly white violence. Before the year was out, over 70,000 students were engaged in sit-ins, black and white. By 1961, "Freedom Rides" rolled through Southern states in protest to racial segregation, resulting in vicious violence by white racist groups like the Ku Klux Klan.

By 1963, 4 Black girls were bombed in a Baptist church, in Birmingham (called 'Bombingham'), Alabama. Soon, white and black civil rights workers would be murdered in Mississippi.

As these events happened, a new invention called television carried these images into millions of Black homes across America.

It especially rankled Blacks in the North, for most could remember Southern childhoods, and they knew -- knew, in their bones, that, but for a chance bus ride North, or West, it could be them, their baby sister, their brothers or fathers who would've been brutalized, bombed or shot by the racists.

The Watts Riots tore across the Southern California area on a hot night in August 1965, the result of police mistreatment of Black drivers. For 5 nights, the ghetto burned.

The petty crimes of Newton seemed petty indeed against such a backdrop of violence and terror, and the little guy who once looked at "bloods" on the street as threats, began focusing on new threats --armed men- - armed white men, clad in blue.

Cops, white cops, sneering cops. Domineering cops. Cops hired from the American South.

They rode through Oakland like gangsters in blue, harassing Blacks at will.

These forces converged to energize and radicalize Black youth throughout the community, among the 2 Black students at a junior college in town. Two alumni of Merritt Jr College, having read the speeches of Malcolm X and the essays of Frantz Fanon (in the Wretched of the Earth), met to build a new, radical -- indeed revolutionary -- organization.

Huey P. Newton and Bobby G. Seale would found the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

From October 1st to the 15th, both men would pen the organizations 10 point program and platform. Newton was 24 years old, Seal was 30. (This was 1966)

The men hit the streets, organizing and a revolutionary movement was born.

It was pitched to Black youth, especially ghetto youth, and they joined, and the organization grew. Young men and women would join, and perhaps for the first time in their lives, study -- not for a grade -- but to learn about revolutionary ideas from struggles around the word: China, Cuba, Algeria, South Africa, Vietnam - and beyond.

The BPP (it would later drop the 'self-defense' reference) would grow from its base of Oakland, and expand to Richmond, and Los Angeles - and Seattle, Washington.

But events occurring roughly a year after its founding would catapult the organization, in effect, hydroplaning it, nationwide, exploding it, sending it into over 40 cities across America.

A hot summer evening in 1967, and a car stop by the Oakland police, would result in Huey being charged with murder, 2 cops shot, and Huey sent to hospital with a gunshot wound to his abdomen; it gave birth to the Free Huey Movement, and by so doing, changed the Party's trajectory, from a small, regional group to a national one.

Offices opened in Boston, in Baton Rouge, in Philadelphia, in Chicago, Harlem, The Bronx, Winston-Salem, Omaha, Baltimore, Detroit, Jersey city, Kansas City, San Diego, and more. Where there were Black communities, there were Black militants, most moved by the masterful oratory and martyrdom of Malcolm X. These young brothers and sisters, mostly teenagers, formed the bulk of Black Panther membership.

All of these brothers and sisters, thousands, across the nation, joined, in some degree, because of their admiration, respect, and for some, veneration of the Minister of Defense.

Most, too, did not know him. They never met him. They read of him, and fell in love; some with him; some with his amazing vision: a Black Panther Party.

Because Newton was complex, so was his creation; it changed, constantly, as he changed and developed. From a Malcolmite, Nationalist organization, to a revolutionary nationalist, to a revolutionary internationalist, to socialist, to Maoist, to what Newton termed an Inter-communalist.

This was Newton's theoretical construct; that, nations were but illusions, assemblies of flags, for in the presence of a global imperial power (such as the U.S); nations were, at best, communities.

He believed that U.S economic power shattered sovereignties, for those who controlled foreign economies, actually controlled those states; the rest is subterfuge (Newton 169-170)

In 1972, Newton, using intercommunalist theory, predicted the fall of the Soviet Union. 1972.

While traditional Marxists ridiculed Newton's ideas, the Soviet Union shuttered its doors on Dec. 26, 1991, two years after Newton's ignoble death on a street corner by a crack dealer.

Complex, brilliant, self-taught, a Ph.D., fearless, full of fear, crazy, drug fiend, beautiful, mad -perhaps all of these epithets could, at times, describe the founder of the Black Panther Party.

If Panthers could've worshipped him less, and loved him more, perhaps he could've survived; perhaps the Party would've survived. Perhaps.

A memory, if you will.

The place? Death Row, PA Ca. 1996

Your speaker is in discussion with acclaimed womanist writer, Alice Walker. We are lamenting the passing of Huey.

"He should've been at a Black college, teaching a new generation of activist", I say

"Are you kidding me?" she asks.

"Whaddayu mean?"

"You have no idea of the politics in academia. They'd do anything to run him out!"

"Run him out?" Why? I'd think he'd be the most popular professor on campus?"

“Why do you think they’d run him out?”
“ You ain’t seen nothin’ til you’ve seen the politics in academia!”

Perhaps. But this was not to be.

Yet, who could deny Newton’s brilliance, which is all the more remarkable because up until he entered 10th grade, he was all but illiterate?

Huey tells an arresting tale of how his secret was uncovered. Like younger brothers, he looked up to his older brother, Melvin. And like most illiterates, he developed an extraordinary memory.

When Melvin came home one day, he saw Huey reciting from one of his books. At first impressed, he turned and stunned the youth by declaring him illiterate.

How had he known? The book held in Huey’s hands was upside-down.

Huey, shamed, essentially taught himself to read using the power of his will. He therefore read slowly, but deeply, draining each word of its significance (Abu-Jamal 3-5)

Oddly enough, this may have proven an advantage of Newton’s over traditional readers, who learn their basics in kindergarten or first, second grades.

How so? Illiterates, as we’ve suggested, devote a significant amount of mental energy to memorize important data, especially to avoid the shame of discovery. This is no mean feat. One must by sheer necessity, develop a way of knowing that is based on hearing and retaining data that early writers and readers never actualize.

Moreover, illiterates must develop original ways of seeing and interpreting and categorizing the world. For unlike your literate colleagues, you are unable to relay and store data on a page; you must store data on your internal mental templated -and then develop the machinery for retrieval.

Such a person seems, in a sense, a freer thinker, able to question, make sense of, and define the world in one’s own way.

And all of this must be done under the constant psychological stress and presence of discovery, which evokes shame.

This may account for Huey’s intensity, and his constant inability to speak before large audiences, which must have seemed unbearable.

By the same token, once it was discovered that Huey was illiterate, he used considerable mental energy to learn, to essentially teach himself that hidden art. Such a process must have released enormous forces that could now be devoted to belated learning, cognition and retention.

Co-founder Bobby Seale wrote that Newton read the book, *The Wretched of the Earth* by revolutionary psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon, some 6 times (Seale 25). This text, translated from Fanon’s native French, is a difficult work for any reader. One thinks it deeply informed Newton on concepts of decolonization, anti-imperialism, Arab independence movements, torture and its resultant traumas, both upon the tortured and the torturer.

It also was a primer on revolutionary violence -- how the oppressed must confront the oppressor.

How could these ideas not prove definitive in the founding and formation of the Black Panther Party? The concept of Black America as a colony and White America as the Mother Country can be explained by Fanon's ideas of the colonial struggle against the oppressive, exploitative European imperial powers.

The book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, so influential to the Party's founders, became required reading for members, and was often discussed in PE classes. As it was written by a Black man actively engaged in a North African revolutionary endeavor, it took on an added sheen and influence.

Indeed, Fanon's masterwork was so highly regarded in the late '60s and early '70s that it was called 'The Handbook of the Black Revolution'.

Huey's Mind

Newton's mind seemed never to rest, for he read a wide range of literature to answer questions of existence. He found the writings of German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), especially his *The Will to Power and Beyond Good and Evil*, especially influential.

While not citing him explicitly, as early as 1971, the 5th year of the Party's existence, Nietzsche's influence can be seen in Newton's article of 5 June, 1971, "Black capitalist" re-analyzed: He writes:

When we coined the expression "All power to the people", we had in mind emphasizing the word "power" for we recognize that the will to power is the basic drive of man. But it is incorrect to seek power over people. We have been subjected to the dehumanizing power of exploitation and racism for hundreds of years; and the Black community has its will to power also. What we seek, however, is not power over people, but the power of control of our own destiny. (Newton 227)

It is hard to read such words without encountering Nietzsche whether he cites him or not, for the central theme is inescapable; "...the will to power is the basic drive of man."

Newton was, at bottom, at a deep foundational level, a Nietzschean. Indeed, he was more Nietzschean than Marxist, for he often criticized Marxism as dogmatic. Marxism was a way; Nietzscheism was objective underlying the way: power.

Yet Nietzsche, unlike Fanon or Chairman Mao, was not required reading.

Elaine Brown writes that, at Huey's behest, the Party established a school for party leadership to attempt to acquaint them with broad philosophical ideas:

Now they were wondering about his ideological institute. I saw the questions as the local leadership cadres came trooping to Oakland from as far away as Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago for bi-monthly, two-day learning sessions led by Huey. Where was the stuff about the pigs, they seemed to ask, as we studied not only Mao and Marx but Aristotle and Plato. Where was the stuff about urban guerrilla warfare? Their expressions conveyed, as Huey led us in discussions of the philosophies of Rousseau and Kant, [sic] Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, about existentialism and determinism and free will. I saw their faces when we examined and questioned the theories of capitalism and socialism and communism. Huey asking whether our systematic use of the tests of dialectical materialism meant anything. If, under a dialectical materialist analysis, nothing "stood outside" of the process, did that negate the process itself, he asked? (Brown 255-56)

Huey P. Newton was, by necessity, a man of action, but he was always also a man of ideas. He was so as an illiterate; he became more so when he began to read and added exponentially to his storehouse of ideas.

As a dialectical materialist, he knew that everything was in a state of flux; that change was the only constant. As a Nietzschean, he knew that only power could influence that change, and direct it along its desired course.

One needed the will to power.

Huey had no shortage of that quality.

When he went to prison, he knew every Panther in California, for he or Bobby had recruited him (or her). When he was freed on appeal in 1970, he emerged to a group that he neither knew, nor built. There were Panthers in Boston, Harlem, Philadelphia and Detroit.

He didn't know these people, even if all of them were inspired by him. If you didn't know someone, how could you trust him?

To add insult to injury, the FBI's Cointelpro program had bogus letters sent to him, ostensibly from other Panthers, criticizing his rule, criticizing other Panthers and even threatening him.

Who were these people? he must have wondered.

So, using his mighty will, he shrunk the party, probably intending to rebuild it, in his Nietzschean image.

That was not to be.

He tried, with all his might, to change history.

But history is a cruel mistress. She loves, she caresses, and she moves on, creating new days, new possibilities, and new realities.

Dr. Huey P. Newton dared to struggle; and inspired millions to also fight against a twisted, broken, racist system. He built an organization that rattled the cages of oppressed and oppressor alike.

Then, like the true Nietzschean he was, he shattered it into a thousand pieces.

He lived. He rebelled. He inspired. He died.

But most of all, he rebelled.

That's more than most of us can say.

Works Cited

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Seale, B. (1970) *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton*. New York: Vintage.

January 16th - The War against White Men

Several days ago, while viewing the Sunday weekly CNN show hosted by Fareed Zakaria, I saw a segment documenting the rising death tolls of white men, especially those between the ages of 45 and 54 years. The causes were various:

Drug overdoses: car accidents; alcoholism, and suicides.

Of course, some of these other causes, such as drugs and car accidents are actually hidden suicides. No other group showed such sharp increases.

I think it intriguing, especially when class and education were factored in: working-class and high school diploma, or less.

I've since read half a dozen articles, some scientific, others journalistic; from a variety of publications, many speculating on causes: failing health; low wages; fear of a changing, browning America, etc.

Yet none of these articles touched on what initially came to mind.

I'll call it the NAFTA Effect. (For the North America Free Trade Agreement), which sent millions of manufacturing jobs across the border, and U.S. businesses in search of cheaper labor. For me, this reason seemed obvious, especially since NAFTA was so widely known; for it affected jobs on both sides of the border, forcing wages lower and lower.

An owner, for example, faced with union demands for higher wages, might easily threaten to go overseas to frighten labor leaders into concessions –even givebacks!

NAFTA, the gift of Clinton I, was an executive betrayal of labor which fought for and funded the Presidential campaign of William Jefferson Clinton.

He betrayed them by making a sweet deal with the business class – a now rich white guy waged war on poor and working-class white guys, to enrich other white guys.

It ain't the only factor, but I'm convinced it is a factor.

Americans –once again – voting for their own betrayers.

January 25th - Report back to NYC & next steps

WHAT: Mumia vs. the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

WHEN: 6:30-9:00pm, Monday, January 25

WHERE: Riverside Church, Room 9T (Tower Building) - 91 Claremont Avenue (between 120th & 121st Streets)

COST: FREE

Mumia is fighting not only for himself but for the (under)estimated 7,000 other Pennsylvania prisoners

Come to a report back on the three days in December that shook the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC)'s refusal to provide the appropriate and curative treatment available for Mumia and at least 7,000 other Pennsylvania prisoners infected with the hepatitis-C virus. Those dramatic three days, December 18, 22, and 23, marked a turning point in exposing the DOC's policy of negligence and malevolence in denying available cures for this deadly disease. A new DOC protocol for treating hep-C patients, something that both activists and legislators had been clamoring for, was secretly issued on

November 12, 2015. The DOC attorney was now insisting that Mumia's attorneys agree not to publicize this document. Mumia's attorneys refused to agree to this attempt at hiding the horrendous truth in this new document.

Supporters traveled from around the northeast to Scranton, Pennsylvania, for hearings in federal court that included expert testimony from independent physician Dr. Joseph Harris, who saw Mumia in SCI Mahanoy's visiting room, and from Mumia himself through videoconferencing. On the third day, DOC medical and legal personnel were caught in a shocking lie when the Chief of Clinical Services, Dr. Paul Noel, was asked if a sworn declaration that bore his signature was accurate. He quickly agreed that the signature was his but immediately added that the text attributed to him was not what he had said. It became clear that the DOC's attorney, Laura Neal, had illegally altered what Dr. Noel had put in writing. He clarified what she had distorted, and the attorney had to reluctantly acknowledge her falsification.

A hearing that was initially scheduled for one day as a preliminary injunction suit aimed at getting Mumia the urgent medical care he needs for his hepatitis-C infection became a three-day, in-depth examination of the DOC response to its high-profile inmate and his prolonged health crisis.

Speakers: Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the MOVE Organization; Bob Boyle, Mumia's attorney around the hepatitis-C crisis; Suzanne Ross of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) and International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; other invited guests

7 Jan - Nebraska claims Omaha Two have not asked for release from prison

Despite exhausting their appeals to get out of prison, the Omaha Two have now failed to request parole properly says a spokeswoman for the Nebraska Governor's office.

MORE:

by Michael Richardson (*The Examiner*)

The Nebraska Board of Pardons claims neither Edward Poindexter nor Mondo we Langa, former David Rice, have asked for reconsideration of their sentence. The two men, now known as the Omaha Two, have been imprisoned forty-five years for the 1970 bombing murder of Omaha Patrolman Larry Minard, Sr. Both men deny any role in Minard's death and were targets of the illegal, clandestine COINTELPRO counterintelligence operation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The two former Black Panther leaders have been seeking their release since arrest and have exhausted their appeal rights trying to get out of prison, which makes the state's position sound a bit like doubletalk. Spokeswoman Sonya Fauver with the Governor's office responded to justice advocate Sandy Shevack on Jan. 6 that the inmates have to ask for action on their cases.

Fauver wrote in an email message, "As of to date, Mr. Rice and Mr. Poindexter have not submitted an application to the Nebraska Board of Pardons requesting a commutation of their sentences."

Both Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa have been repeatedly recommended for parole by the Nebraska Parole Board only to be stopped by the Board of Pardons which must first commute their life sentences to a fixed number of years in order for them to be eligible for parole. The Board of Pardons is made up of the Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State.

Poindexter sought a federal court determination several years ago that the composition of the Board of Pardons is unconstitutional and that he is serving a defacto life without parole sentence. Poindexter withdrew his lawsuit over lack of representation and health problems before resolution of the issue. Mondo

appealed to the Nebraska Supreme Court that the composition of the Board of Pardons was unconstitutional because the Attorney General's office appears in court against him. The Nebraska Supreme Court denied Mondo's appeal without even issuing a written decision addressing Mondo's constitutional claim.

The news that he needs to file an application for commutation may come as a surprise to Ed Poindexter, but likely not to Mondo we Langa. Mondo has already travelled this road when the Nebraska Supreme Court upheld District Judge James Gleason's assertion that Mondo had not properly pleaded innocent in his appeal. Mondo's attorney, Timothy Ashford, had written:

“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.”

Neither Judge Gleason, who rejected Mondo's post-trial appeal, nor the Nebraska Supreme Court, which upheld Gleason, would explain what was wrong with Mondo's innocence plea, despite denying him his day in court over the alleged defective plea.

Sandy Shevack, a New Jersey university professor, made his query in behalf of the Omaha Two as part of a new citizen effort to obtain medical release for the two ailing and aged prisoners. Shevack wrote to Governor Pete Ricketts: “They have spent over 45 years in prison. The German Group of Amnesty International has extensively reviewed this case and has called for their immediate release or retrial. Neither men would be a threat to society. It is time to free both men on compassionate release.”

The citizen effort began recently in Omaha. Another justice advocate, Cleo Silvers, expressed his motivation to help the Omaha Two: “Everyone is now aware of the secret conspiracy on the part of J.Edgar Hoover to frame and prosecute these brothers in Omaha. They are not now nor have they ever been anything but positive contributors to the community and the nation. The work they did in their community was phenomenal and some of it still lingers today. They should be freed, pardoned and apologized to by the highest office in the country. It is our responsibility to spread the news of the need for them to have their freedom.”

The Omaha Two were targets of J.Edgar Hoover who ordered a FBI Laboratory test withheld on the identify of the anonymous 911 caller who lured the policeman to his death. Hoover was willing to let a policeman's killer get away with murder to make a case against the two Black Panther leaders. Further, the death penalty was sought against Poindexter and Mondo. Although the jury, unaware of withheld evidence under COINTELPRO directives, spared their lives, the two men were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Poindexter suffers from diabetes, hypertension, and complications from neuropathy. Mondo ails with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and has been in the prison infirmary for the past several months.

9 Jan - New Poetry from Eric King

Following a successful late night dance party fundraiser for pre-trial anarchist prisoner Eric King this past weekend, we're happy to share some of his latest poetry.

MORE:

January 9th - Malawi Birds

I heard the Malawi birds
they were bundled and stacked
buried so deep

but their voices reach so high
does their location
negate the warmth of their tears
we can learn so much from suffering
how long must our education persist
who will finally be the one
to rip the door off the cage
wings were meant to fly
not to die...

January 17th - Untitled

I think I see it, clearer
they want us to live life in fear
not feeling that kind of life
broken into our minds
robbery mask on tight
to steal our sense of humanity
the guns are locked & loaded
and they've handed them over
made us into hunters
where do we go from here?
We pretend we're still human
have brains we refuse to use them
is peace really a blade sharpened
or a face stomped in?
I remember how it used to feel
to smile and mean it
it still sitting in my mind
if I can keep it safe and sound
then through this maze I can be found

9 Jan - "A Reintroduction and Some Thoughts on Terrorism, Language and Context, and Strategy" by Brandon Baxter

Below is a copy of a transcription from a piece of mail from Brandon Baxter of the Cleveland Four.

MORE:

Since our arrest in 2012 I have maintained a near radio silence public profile despite regular and sincere encouragement to share my thoughts and ideas through mediums such as this. This was done intentionally as I had, until this point, maintained a glimmer of hope that I'd be able to fight my case in court. Today I received notice that my latest efforts to appeal my conviction were shut down by the court. There still remains a few avenues of recourse, but the prospects of a bright horizon, in those regards, are abysmal. Therefore, no longer will I be concerned with what I think and say being misconstrued and used against me in a court of law.

I'll begin by sharing that I do not accept the United States' designation of myself or any other dissident as a terrorist. In fact, I do not recognize the right to designate anyone as a terrorist as a right possessed by the United States, which is itself a terrorist State and member of the largest terrorist alliance on the globe—NATO. By the United States' own definition of terrorism, that any act or threat that can be construed as

violent which is calculated to influence or retaliate (or support such actions) against a government, every so-called "police action" and act of war perpetrated by the United States is an act of terrorism.

But simply because the United States' acts of violence are by their own definition terrorism does not mean that I accept their definition. I definitely do not accept the United States' notion that it has a right to define words, especially since when it chooses to do so it has a tendency to define words arbitrarily and in contradiction to popularly understood meaning in order to suit its own agenda. Murder, for instance, is a crime, so according to United States it is not murder when a police officer murders an unarmed child; or when a remote drone pilot murders unarmed non-combatants. In these sorts of cases innocent people are killed, not murdered, because if they were murdered it would undermine the United States' use of terrorism to maintain its power.

You see, when we accept their control of language how can we ever hope to truly establish our own narrative: they control the context.

With this in mind, I am proposing a definition of terrorism for you to ponder and encourage you to put it in to common use. Terrorism is: the systemic use of terror intended to coerce a certain behavior. Basically, any act that can be construed as carrying the meaning, "do this..." or "don't do that...or else," is terrorism.

Within this context we can begin to see more clearly that the existence of the State is itself an act of terrorism. The State exists through the systemic use and threat of force and prisons to coerce compliance to a never ending list of laws and regulations crafted to keep and expand the power of those who have it. The existence of a military is an implied threat to all sovereigns to not interfere with United States interests, whether political or economic, and is an act of terrorism. The existence of prisons is an implied threat against the powerless that they better comply with dictates of power, or else be taken away from everyone they love to be thrown in a dangerous environment where they will be dehumanized, brutalized, and have to defend themselves from other people under the same circumstances for years at a time, and is an act of terrorism. The existence of the police is an implied threat to everyone within their territorial jurisdiction, a constant reminder that at any moment they can be killed (but not murdered) with impunity or sent to prison on fabricated charges, and is an act of terrorism. Within this context we can give teeth to the narrative of those without power.

Next, I denounce the modern incarnation of terrorism as either a revolutionary or liberatory strategy in our postmodern era. As a strategy, what modern terrorism has achieved is a tightening grip of power in the hands of the security state with no tangible benefit to revolutionary movements. While some proponents of this strategy might argue that the growth of the security state was the intended consequence of modern terrorism campaigns and a significant burden upon the United States economy totaling hundred of billions of dollars in security costs, which are in large part to blame for the economic decline of the United States as an empire, such arguments still fail to take into account that the United States Federal Reserve has been printing money backed by nothing (except debt) since 1933. When they print money from thin air, what meaning does an economy have to those in power—when power is the only real currency with any real value?

What I mean by the modern incarnation of terrorism within the context as a revolutionary strategy is acts or threats of violence against non-combatants with the intent to draw State forces into protracted conflict in order to drain their economy. Violence targeted against non-combatants is simply unconscionable, especially when the non-combatants have no relationship to the State aside from, maybe, citizenship. But more to the point, modern terrorism is ineffectual as a revolutionary strategy and serves only to further consolidate power into fewer and fewer hands.

A few side notes on definitions: property is not violence unless it affirmatively impedes the ability to maintain life (i.e., the Israeli military bulldozing Palestinian homes or burning people's food supply are acts of violence. Sabotaging mining equipment or burning a flag are not.), and sabotage is not terrorism within a revolutionary context. It may be worthwhile to note that the strategic intent of terrorism is to terrorize, typically a state, and thereby attack their economy indirectly. On the other hand, direct action, which is calculated to exact direct results, seeks to affect change directly, not through fear or terror, and is therefore not terrorism. To be fair, certain forms of violently executed direct action can be fairly construed as acts of war. I would neither condone nor oppose such direct action, though at this point I would consider it unwise, and would ultimately prefer they be avoided, but cautiously accept that they might, at some point, be a necessity.

Finally, I'd like to promote building egalitarian infrastructure based on anarchist horizontalism as the liberatory strategy pragmatically appropriate for our time. So many of the ongoing projects have so much potential to create their own power if only they would take themselves more seriously and think in terms of breaking community dependence on State and incorporated institutions instead of partaking in symbolic acts and demonstrations. I have a lot of ideas I intend to share and invite discussion on in the near future.

For those of you already laying this foundation, I give you my most sincere gratitude and wishes for further progress.

Expect to hear from me more often.

Feel free to write me with comments. I appreciate hate mail, too, if you got beef. You can find an up-to-date mailing address at facebook.com/freethe4, and [@FreeCleveland4](https://twitter.com/FreeCleveland4) on Twitter.

13 Jan - Statement from Marius Mason for the Trans Prisoner Day of Action and Solidarity January 22nd 2016

NYC ABC is co-hosting an event with Black and Pink and the Queer Detainee Empowerment Project (QDEP) and we have Marius Mason's statement below.

MORE:

Happy New Year, Family and Friends! Many, many thanks for so much support and care over this year from both long-standing friends and new pen pals. I feel very grateful and am always humbled by the encouragement and resources sent my way by folks who are doing so much already to increase our collective chances for survival. The news has been full of stories about someone winning the big money pool that has accumulated for the US Lotto – but the most important “win” has nothing to do with money. I am betting on the movement to win big this year: in getting more control over their communities and defending against police brutality and racial inequality, in winning more victories for animal and in the defense of wild spaces, in creating social relations based on respect, dignity and compassion for all people....irregardless of their race, orientation, creed or gender presentation.

Thank you for coming together today, to hold up those members of our community who struggle so hard behind walls to keep their sense of self intact. Sovereignty over our selves, our bodies is essential for any other kind of liberty to be possible. By reaching out to trans prisoners, you affirm their right to define themselves for themselves – and defend them against the overwhelming voices who claim that they do not exist, that they must allow others to define them. In the isolating environment of prison, this is toxic and intimidating, and amounts to the cruelest form of psychological torture. By offering your help and solidarity, you may just save a life. I know that for the last year and a half, as I have struggled to assert myself as a transman, as I have advocated for the relief of appropriate medical care for my gender

dysphoria – it has been the gentle and loving reminders of my extended family of supporters who have given me strength and courage to continue. Please join me in offering this help to so many others who need it to keep going. Never underestimate the healing power of a letter, those letters have kept me going...and I want to pass that gift on, if you will help me.

Thank you again for coming together on this day, for connecting to those on the inside who truly need you, who need you to see them as they really are and striving to be. Until the prisons are gone, we need to work hard to support those of us inside – especially those of us who are not always as visible to the rest of the world. We are always stronger together.

January 24th - International Day of Solidarity with Trans Prisoners

WHAT: Letter-writing

WHEN: 2:00-4:00pm, Sunday, January 24

WHERE: Bluestockings Bookstore, Café, & Activist Center - 172 Allen Street, New York, New York 10002

COST: FREE

NYC Black & Pink, Queer Detainee Empowerment Project, and NYC Anarchist Black Cross invite you to a special letter writing event. More about the International Day of Solidarity with Trans Prisoners below!

There will be drinks and snacks available for sale through Blue Stockings. We'll also have more info on ways that you can start find an LGBTQ prisoner penpal if you want.

What can you bring?

Writing materials! Stamps if you want! We can always use more postage!

From transprisoners.net:

January 22, 2016 will be the first annual Trans Prisoner Day of Action: an international day of action in solidarity with trans prisoners.

This is a call to action against the system which seeks to erase our very existence. The survival of trans and other sex and gender minority people is not a quaint conversation about awareness, but a struggle for us to live in a world so determined to marginalize, dehumanize, and criminalize us – especially trans women, and especially Black, brown, and indigenous trans people.

We are discriminated against in every area of society including housing, healthcare, employment. Our survival is often precarious and many of us survive by work that is also criminalized – making us even more of a target for police harassment and the crime of “Walking While Trans.”

Once incarcerated, trans people face humiliation, physical and sexual abuse, denial of medical needs, and legal reprisals. Many transgender people are placed in solitary confinement for months or years, simply for being trans. Trans women are usually placed in men’s prisons, where there is a massive increased risk of experiencing sexual violence.

Just as our lives are violently repressed on the outside, trans people experience extreme suffering and death within the walls of jails, prisons, youth facilities, and immigrant detention centers.

Trans Prisoner Day of Action on January 22nd is a day to acknowledge the experiences of trans and other sex and gender-minority prisoners. It’s about collaboration. It is about forging new relationships and

dismantling the isolation of prison. It's about resistance to state violence. It's about solidarity between those who experience the violence of the system first hand and those for whom the state hasn't come yet.

Many prisoner support and prison abolition groups around the world do so much excellent work writing letters to prisoners, educating the public with letters to editors and articles for the media, holding protests and marches, organizing queer communities to phone in and demand that trans prisoners be treated with respect and dignity, calling for an end to incarceration. Trans Prisoner Day of Action aims to make this work accessible to all who are in support – we encourage you to hold vigils for those in our communities who have been taken by State violence, to hold an event, host speakers, screen films, invite presentations, and hold workshops to spread the word on the experience of trans prisoners, share knowledge, and build strategies of resistance. Have dance parties and raise funds for people and groups already doing amazing work. Take action. Let's join together and show our conviction in supporting each other and ending prisons once and for all.

This project was first imagined by Marius Mason, a trans prisoner in Texas, USA. Since then, through his friends and supporters, an international collective of people both inside and outside of prison walls have come together to make Trans Prisoner Day of Action a reality. We are trans and non-trans folks and friends and supporters. We join a long tradition of trans and queer people resisting state violence.

Join with us in the struggle for freedom.

18 Jan - Statement from Oscar López Rivera on Puerto Rican political prisoner Ana Belen Montes

Oscar López Rivera has issued a statement about Puerto Rican political prisoner Ana Belen Montes, who is serving one of the harshest sentences of total isolation in US federal prison at Carswell.

MORE:

Oscar stated:

“Various friends and companeros have asked how I would feel about having Ana Belen Montes’ name alongside mine in the campaign for my freedom. It would be a great honor for me. I think that every Puerto Rican who loves justice and freedom should be proud of Ana Belen. What she did was more than heroic. She what every person who believes in peace, justice and liberty and in the right of every nation to govern itself in the best way possible and without intervention or threats from anyone would have done. She did what she did because she knew that the government of the United States was intent on destroying the Cuban government and imposing on the Cuban people a system designed by Washington, one more attempt at regime change. The objectives of the US government were criminal and if she hadn't acted as she did she would have been supporting those actions. We should all be proud of her, support her and demand her release from prison.”