



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for March 27th

4 Mar - Water Protector Support: Happi AmericanHorse Held Captive By The U.S. Empire

Happi is currently being held captive by the U.S. Empire around his traditional Lakota homelands (so-called Bismarck, North Dakota).

MORE:

He is in Burleigh / Morton County Detention Center. Any and all funds will be used for his freedom. As a frontline warrior, he took courage during the #NoDAPL struggle by putting his body in front of earth-destroying construction equipment and stood up for the people. Happi continues to inspire with his humble and happy spirit.

12 Mar - Remembering Merle Africa 20 Years Later

March 13th 2018 marked 20 years since MOVE political prisoner Merle Africa died under mysterious circumstances at The State Correctional Institution in Cambridge Springs Pennsylvania.

MORE:

This is a piece written in dedication to Merle by MOVE political prisoner Mike Africa. On March 13th we are asking people to circulate and collect signatures for our petition aimed at the United States Justice Department for The Move 9. People can sign the petition at <https://www.causes.com/campaigns/92454-free-the-move-9>

In a day of remembrance for Merle and her work, let's push this petition and collect more signatures. Lastly this is a portrait of Merle painted by Brooklyn Based painter Sophia Dawson. We would like to thank Sophia for letting us use this painting of Merle. We are also asking people to please not use the image from this painting for your personal use.

Ona Move

As you may know by now, August 8th, 1978, The Move Organization was attacked by hundreds of Philadelphia cops and firemen. They were there to perform what they considered to be the final solution to MOVE to kill us all.

Knowing we had all gone to the basement of our Headquarters, the police began tearing the house down around us. Firemen then unleashed a downpour of water from their hoses, just before other cops shot in smoke and tear gas, followed by a seemingly endless barrage of gunfire.

When the smoke cleared somewhat, the city realized that they had mostly shot up their own folks . Chuck, Delbert, and one of our puppies had been wounded but the bulk of their gunfire had hit other cops and firemen. The area looked exactly like the war zone the city had turned it into. Smoke and tear gas swirling throughout the neighborhood, occupying the force of cops chasing down neighbors who protested their presence .

Through all that smoke and official rage, came Merle slowly striding into view. Only she wasn't trying to avoid anyone. She was CONFRONTING THEM ! Loudly, Defiantly, with her thoughts not of her own well being, but on verbally charging the police for what they had just done to her family and that is our sister Merle!

A very generous and courageous soul. Concern and Commitment to family, A careful and considerate friend, a gentle nurturer but a fierce protector. I still often read the letters she sent me over the years . They always make me laugh, They always make me think, they would always encourage me to be the kind of person that anyone would be proud to know and trust. To Just Try. She told me that each day was yet another fresh opportunity to look critically at yourself and improve and how great a gift it was to have an opportunity to be a better self for those you love and who love you.

I see her as I write this. I hear her loud infectious laugh. Hear her very encouraging tone.

Merle spent the last 30 years of her life demonstrating her commitment to activism, to revolution , to MOVE, TO JOHN AFRICA . I am honored to have known her for the time i did . Her loyal family spirit will travel with me always .

I Love You Sister!

12 Mar - RAPP Campaign: News, Updates & Actions

Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) contacts you with the latest news, updates, and actions on their work to #FreeOurElders #SupportOurElders.

MORE:

PAROLE JUSTICE UPDATES:

- We continue to push back on Governor Cuomo's "Geriatric Parole" proposal, which is far too limited, excludes people based on crime, and guarantees that some people will die in prison.
- We demand that the Governor and Parole Board presumptively release those currently eligible for parole, provide a "second look" or consideration of parole release to older people (55 plus) not otherwise eligible for parole after serving 15 consecutive years in prison, and create a medical parole program that is speedy, transparent, and inclusive of all people regardless of their crime (see more info on our position here).
- In addition to pushing for the above changes, we and our colleagues continue to demand a fully staffed Parole Board with Commissioners who better represent our communities and value mercy, redemption, and real public safety.
- As of January 2018, all four Commissioners who resigned or the Governor refused to reappoint were officially confirmed to be off the Parole Board. Additionally, all six new Commissioners, who better reflect our communities, have been on-boarded and are sitting on hearings (see a full list of the Commissioners here).

IMPACT:

- Since our work to restructure the Parole Board and implement the Board's new regulations, the Board has released more people.
- The Parole Board's overall release rates have increased from 24% to 37%; from 27% to 37% for those serving a parole-eligible life sentence; and from 24% to 40% for older people.
- While we are happy to see more people coming home, the Parole Board still unacceptably denies the majority of people they see and much more work is needed for real parole justice.

13 Mar - Herman Bell Granted Parole!

A respected elder, Herman Bell, was granted parole as of April 17, 2018, having met all the criteria for release according to his sentence.

MORE:

The parole commissioners recognized his progress after serving nearly 45 years in prison and granted his parole application. He is looking forward to being reunited with his family and friends. We welcome him home.

March 18th - Don't Let Parole Become a Meaningless Concept

by Editorial Board (*New York Times*)

Some felt Herman Bell deserved execution or at least a prison sentence of life without parole, but in mid-1970s New York those weren't options. No question, Mr. Bell's crime was a despicable assault on society itself. In 1971, with fellow Black Liberation Army radicals, he ambushed two police officers in Harlem, repeatedly and fatally shooting them as part of a war they had declared on the United States.

Rather than being condemned to prison forever, Mr. Bell got 25 years to life. Now, at 70, and after more than 44 years behind bars, he has been granted parole by a New York State board, which found he had expressed "regret and remorse." Long in coming though the statement was, he is said to have told board members this month: "There was nothing political about the act, as much as I thought at the time. It was murder and horribly wrong." In mid-April, he could be freed from his maximum-security prison in the Hudson Valley.

Despite angry reactions from law enforcement groups and others, the process worked as it should if parole is to amount to more than an empty word. Our prisons call themselves "correctional facilities." The New York board found that Mr. Bell had indeed been corrected, based on a solid disciplinary record, a "sturdy network of supporters" and a likelihood of his now leading a "law-abiding life." To lock him up forever even though deemed a changed man is to make a mockery of his sentence: "25 years to life" is not supposed to be cynical code for "life."

Parole is understandably fraught in cases of slain police officers. Emotions run high, as does posturing by the politically powerful. In New York, a notable example involves two women who were part of a leftist band that killed two police officers and a guard during a bungled robbery of a Brink's armored car in 1981.

Though plainly guilty of involvement in the crime, neither of the women, Kathy Boudin and Judith Clark, fired a shot. They both went on to become model prisoners who expressed remorse for their actions. Ms. Boudin was paroled in 2003. But the road to freedom has been rockier for Ms. Clark, denied parole once again last year despite having had her sentence commuted by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

The Bell case is a reminder of how brutal New York could be in the early 1970s, an era of supercharged racial and political hostilities. Mr. Bell's victims, Waverly Jones and Joseph Piagentini, were among 12 police officers in the city shot to death in 1971. In contrast, it has taken the past 13 years to record 12 officer deaths. (The New York City police, too, are now far more restrained, fatally shooting eight criminal suspects in a typical year, compared with the 1971 toll of 93.)

Officer Piagentini's widow, Diane, remains implacably opposed to freeing Mr. Bell. The parole board's decision, she said, "devalues the life of my brave husband" and "betrayed the trust" of police families. But relatives of Officer Jones have been more forgiving. In a 2014 interview with *The Daily News*, Waverly Jones Jr. said, "This man has been in prison for over 30 years and hasn't gotten into so much as an argument." To continue to lock him up, Mr. Jones said, "would only be for revenge."

He's right. And vengeance is not supposed to guide a system of justice.

March 18th - Support Herman Bell – Four Things to do Right Now!

Last week the New York State Board of Parole granted Herman Bell release. Since the Board's decision, there has been significant backlash from the Police Benevolent Association, other unions, Mayor De Blasio and Governor Cuomo. They are demanding that Herman be held indefinitely, the Parole Commissioners who voted for his release be fired, and that people convicted of killing police be left to die in prison.

We want the Governor, policymakers, and public to know that we strongly support the Parole Board's lawful, just and merciful decision. We also want to show support for the recent changes to the Board, including the appointment of new Commissioners and the direction of the new parole regulations, which

base release decisions more on who a person is today and their accomplishments while in prison than on the nature of their crime.

Herman has a community of friends, family and loved ones eagerly awaiting his return. At 70 years old and after 45 years inside, it is time for Herman to come home.

Here are four things you can do RIGHT NOW to support Herman Bell:

- **CALL** New York State Governor Cuomo's Office NOW 518-474-8390
- **EMAIL** New York State Governor Cuomo's Office: governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form
- **TWEET** at Governor Cuomo: use the following sample tweet:
"@NYGovCuomo: stand by the Parole Board's lawful & just decision to release Herman Bell. At 70 years old and after more than 40 years of incarceration, his release is overdue. #BringHermanHome."
- **PARTICIPATE** in a CBS poll and vote YES on the Parole Board's decision

The poll ends on March 21st. Please do this ASAP! [**UPDATE**: The poll closed with thousands of voters and the results were 86% in favor of parole, 14% against]

Script for phone calls and emails:

"Governor Cuomo, my name is _____ and I am a resident of [New York State/other state/other country]. I support the Parole Board's decision to release Herman Bell and urge you and the Board to stand by the decision. I also support the recent appointment of new Parole Board Commissioners, and the direction of the new parole regulations, which base release decisions more on who a person is today than on the nature of their crime committed years ago. Returning Herman to his friends and family will help heal the many harms caused by crime and decades of incarceration. The Board's decision was just, merciful and lawful, and it will benefit our communities and New York State as a whole."

Thank you for your support and contributions.

15 Mar - Political Prisoner Jalil Muntaqim: Black Panther: A Movie

Please read the latest by NYS PP Jalil Muntaqim.

MORE:

Having read many reviews and critiques of the Marvel/Disney "Black Panther" movie, I am excited about what the movie brings to the overall struggle. Indeed, the cultural value of Black nationalism is inestimable, especially if it lends to inspire young people to (re)discover our collective Afrikan heritage. Most recently, I posted MY ANCESTRY, sharing some of my known lineage/heritage from Jamaica's Maroon struggles, and ancestral survival of Texas slavery. Hopefully, this will inspire others to research their lineage, and take pride in how we've collectively evolved in spite of the onslaught of white racist oppression/repression.

The critiques of the movie have led to a broad range of debate of its significance and value going forward. The Christopher Lebron analysis was poignant and insightful, especially his condemnation of the ostracizing of Black American malehood. However, beyond delineating the strained difference between an Afrikan and a Black American, the issue for me raised the question of class divisions. In my recent essay, "The Unpragmatic Debate," on the debate between Cornell West and Ta Nehisi Coates, I argued that the Black intelligentsia needs to take great lengths to forge an analysis of class divisions of the Black nation-body. Similarly, that argument extends to this movie.

T'Challa and Wakanda could very well represent the upper class Black capitalists, while Killmonger's aspirations represent the lower class activists fighting to survive racist oppression, and seeking to build a national/international determination not unlike Marcus Garvey to liberate all Black/Afrikan people. Unfortunately, the Black capitalists, and their hoarding of wealth, are at odds with dispensing and distribution of wealth (Vibranium), believing such wealth need only be passed down through their family as an inheritance (Wakanda).

Killmonger, like the hero in “The Spook Who Sat By the Door” learned how to fight the system using the system’s methods ... but recognizes that, before he can engage the real enemy, he has to confront what El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz identifies as the “House Negro.” The “Field Negro” Killmonger must challenge the bourgeois neo-colonial mentality of T’Challa, although Killmonger suffers from psychological trauma, having been raised in the racist oppression of Oakland ghettos. (Read: Fanon’s “Wretched of the Earth” and “A Dying Colonialism”). Furthermore, Killmonger represents those who made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of Black people’s fight for freedom, not unlike Mark Essex, Micah Johnson and the revolutionaries of the Black Liberation Army who retaliated against police murder of innocent Black folks (see poem: What Did They Think?).

You get the gist of my thinking, inasmuch as the real Black Panthers had to confront the Black petty bourgeoisie during the 60’s-70’s, who more often than not opposed the BPP’s efforts to win our people to revolutionary struggle. Hence, Killmonger symbolically represents, by Hollywood’s standards, the quintessential revolutionary Black nationalist, while T’Challa represents the quintessential Afrikan cultural nationalist (capitalist). This contextually parallels the philosophical and ideological contradiction and struggle between Huey P. Newton’s Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and Ron Karenga’s US organization. A Cointelpro-provoked struggle led to the death of Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter and John Higgins on the campus of UCLA, to the delight of the FBI. This is the lesson that the movie most seems to miss or gloss over. The struggle between T’Challa and Killmonger is a revolutionary nationalist and class struggle. There is little difference, for the most part, from the struggles we are currently engaged in. The debate between West and Coates speaks to issues of sociopolitical and economic conditions of Black folks; the struggle between T’Challa and Killmonger also speaks to these same issues, and yet Black intelligentsia and the wealthy at large fail to engage in class struggles. The Oprah Winfreys, Robert Johnsons and Michael Jordans, etc., may espouse a cultural affinity to Black reality of struggle, but are beholden to a system that is ultimately exploitative and oppressive to the majority of Black people. Although from time to time, they may make a tepid statement on the issue of mass incarceration, they are absolutely silent on anything pertaining to BPP political prisoners. In this regard, it would be good to note what Kwame Nkrumah informed:

“... [A] racist social structure ... is inseparable from capitalist economic development. For race is inextricably linked with class exploitation; in a racist-capitalist power structure, capitalist exploitation and race oppression are complimentary; the removal of one ensures the removal of the other ...”

Hence, the murdering of Killmonger by T’Challa is the neo-colonial assassination of a revolutionary Black nationalist in protection of the system of Black capitalism. This is synonymous to the assassination of Malcolm X at the hands of other Blacks who were stooges of Cointelpro, state-sponsored violence. These are the lessons of the movie, as dozens of real Black Panthers languish in prisons across racist America, witnessing the deafening silence of all those representing Wakanda with all of their wealth. As another example of a lost opportunity, filmmaker Ava DuVernay posted a photo of Michael B. Jordan and Chadwick Boseman with the poem of James Weldon Johnson.

Here, we find a disconnect of class divisions among those who have a degree of power and influence, failing to consider that a photo of Sundiata Acoli, co-defendant of Assata Shakur, and Dr. Muluatu Shakur, stepfather of Tupac Shakur, alongside Jordan and Boseman would have been appropriate with a narrative on the Black Panther Party. It is this disconnect that a class struggle needs to bridge, and the Black intelligentsia should initiate, corresponding with the heightened Black consciousness of resistance. But let’s not get it twisted; the movie in all of its Afrikan cultural spectacular and warrior women imagery is excellent. However, it should also point to our real warrior(s) Assata Shakur, Nehanda Abiodun, whom none of the actors mentioned on the red carpet... So let us laud Marvel/Disney—Black Panther A Movie—for creating an environment to broaden the discussion on the existence of real Black Panthers, but beyond that...?

“We have a common oppressor, a common exploiter, and a common discriminator... Once we all realize that we have a common enemy, then we unite, on the basis of what we have in common.”

— Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz)

16 Mar - Mumia Abu Jamal Paints Water Color for Victims of “Gang” Policing

This announcement comes from NYC Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee and details new art work released from political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal to benefit young people wrongfully arrested on gang charges in New York.

MORE:

In September of 2017, political prisoner, scholar, artist, and author of the new book *Have Black Lives Ever Mattered*, Mumia Abu Jamal, created a piece of original artwork to be sold as a fundraiser for young people who have been wrongfully arrested in connection with fabricated “gang” related charges in New York.

Now, his one-of-a-kind watercolor, measuring 8.5” X 11”, is available, with all proceeds going to those directly impacted by the violent multi-agency raids. Mumia Abu-Jamal called these raids “state terrorism”, and described some of the scenes faced by individuals impacted by the raids: “[agents] invade homes as if they were foreign nations [and]...held mothers and children at gunpoint.” Mumia also analyzes that this particular tactic in the “war on the poor” is a result of legislation that ended the legal use of the NYPD’s notorious “stop and frisk” program.* With one tool out of their arsenal, the NYPD has teamed up with the FBI, Homeland Security, the DEA, and other state, local, and federal institutions to reinvent a method originally created to prosecute mafia bosses.

Now, instead of prosecuting crime bosses sitting on millions of dollars, policing agencies are using the “Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO)” to put young men living in public housing in federal prison for years. Far from living in riches, many of these young men are working to support their families, and in many cases their incarceration has led to the further impoverishment of their families, especially their mothers, partners, and children. Unable to afford private attorneys, raids victims are given overworked court-appointed attorneys who pressure their clients to take unfavorable plea deals, often confessing to crimes they did not commit. In many cases, the arrests are tied to the forced eviction of families living in public housing through NYCHA’s “permanent exclusion” policy, which allows NYCHA to evict families if someone previously involved in the criminal justice system is found inside their home. This punitive policy creates an impossible situation for families, who need to house their loved ones once they come home from incarceration, but risk losing their housing if they do so. Mothers are being forced to make the heart-wrenching choice between their own housing and their children’s.

Besides the exorbitant costs of fighting eviction and finding new housing in rapidly gentrifying New York City, the slave-catching methods surrounding the RICO Act push an array of costs on family members. Between paying for commissary to cover basic necessities (such as food, toiletries, phone calls, etc), covering the lost wages from incarcerated loved ones, the cost of visits, missing work, and legal fees, the carceral system leaves families impoverished.

The prison-slave system aims to put not just those incarcerated, but all those in their community, into poverty and debt. Abu-Jamal’s painting reflects this reality, showing how “Then...” black folks faced chattel slavery, and “Now...”, that system has been transferred to prison and policing. The painting suggests that just as slaves fought against their conditions and to support one another into freedom, we need to fight now to support our incarcerated brothers and sisters as well as their families, and to abolish the current manifestation of the slave system.

Place your bid on the painting here: <https://www.32auctions.com/herenow>.

To find out more about the raids, you can visit <http://bronx120.org> or facebook.com/iwocnyc. All funds from the auction go directly to supporting family members, for commissary, stamps, and visits.

*From Mumia's Podcast, found here: <http://www.prisonradio.org/media/audio/mumia/war-bronx-254-mumia-abu-jamal>

NB: It's been almost two years since the largest raid in the state, now referred to as the "Bronx 120" citing the number of young people kidnapped, and slowly our comrades are returning home. With many having taken pleas such as possession of marijuana, it is clear that the raids had no basis in reality, and yet they still had to suffer two years (and more) in federal prison, eviction, and the destruction of their lives and their families'. If you're in New York, join us April 21st at the Bronx Social Center for a welcome home party and fundraiser, and you can always contribute to iwoc.nyc@riseup.net on paypal if you cannot bid on the painting or make it to an in person fundraiser.

16 Mar - Call for Contributions: Paper Chained 2018: Prison Writings Journal

The following is an announcement for Paper Chained, a journal that features writing and art from individuals affected by incarceration.

MORE:

Paper Chained is a journal of writings and artistic expressions from individuals affected by incarceration. We are currently seeking contributions from prisoners, ex-prisoners and family members of prisoners for our second journal publication.

Please circulate this callout throughout your networks. If you are currently in prison, have experienced time in prison or have a loved one in prison, we welcome your contributions to this journal! If you know somebody who might be interested in contributing, please pass this information on to them.

Attached is an information sheet that can be printed and mailed to prisoners and a poster you are welcome to share on online media as well as print and display in your neighborhood, workplaces, schools and other community hubs.

Read the first journal online: tinyurl.com/paperchained1

More info: <https://runningwild.noblogs.org>

17 Mar - Two Poems by Connor Stevens

Connor Stevens of the Cleveland 4 recently sent Tucson ABC these two poems, he is scheduled to be released in May 2019.

MORE:

"The tyranny of distance"

A crowded desert
is still a desert
And out of touch
with you
is impossibly distant

My blood
runs wild and loose
and still
i cannot reach you.

i
would trade
every drop
to overcome this tyranny of distance.

"Fire"

There is more warmth
in the fire of your eyes
Than any soul can consume
in a lifetime.
There is more
heat
in the truth
than in a burning cop car.
There is more
truth
in a burning cop car
than in all
the news.
There is
a fire

in your chest!

29 Mar - Anarchism in the Mexican Revolution

WHAT: Circled (A) History Series

WHEN: 7:00-10:00pm, Thursday, March 29th

WHERE: The Base - 1302 Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) is a significant event in anarchist history. Though the complex series of events collectively known as the Revolution could not be called anarchist as a whole, anarchists and anarchist ideas played significant roles throughout the Revolution, which in turn had a significant impact on the movement internationally. Anarchists with the PLM helped spark the initial flame of the revolution, and Zapata's guerrillas were influenced by anarchist ideals, adopting the Magonista slogan "Tierra y Libertad" as their battle cry. International radicals supported their Mexican comrades through solidarity and mutual aid, and international IWW's and other radicals volunteered and fought in the Revolution. The struggles against capitalism, autocracy, colonialism, and for anarchist-communism, women's liberation, and indigenous autonomy all intersected in one of the first major uprisings of the modern era. To this day revolutionaries in Mexico and around the world are inspired by the legacies of the original Zapatistas and Magonistas and the tens of thousands of others who rose up to try to shake off the chains of state, church, and capital.

We'll examine these events and ideas and their relevance to struggles today, from Chiapas to Rojava to Brooklyn and beyond...

'Adelante, compañeros. Pronto escucharéis los primeros disparos; pronto lanzarán el grito de rebeldía los oprimidos. Que no haya uno solo que deje de secundar el movimiento, lanzando con toda la fuerza de la convicción este grito supremo; Tierray Libertad!' -Regeneración (11/19/1910)

31 Mar - Training in Direct Action Planning

WHAT: Training

WHEN: 2:00-4:00pm, Saturday, March 31st

WHERE: The Base - 1302 Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

Strikes, sit ins, occupations — direct actions demonstrate we can change things without depending on politicians or waiting for reform. Join us to learn about how to plan an effective actions and to hear about MACC Emergency Action and the No Platform working group.