

No Incarceration Without Representation!

"I SAID THEN, AND I SAY NOW, THAT WHILE THERE IS A LOWER CLASS, I AM IN IT, AND WHILE THERE IS A CRIMINAL ELEMENT, I AM OF IT, AND WHILE THERE IS A SOUL IN PRISON, I AM NOT FREE."

- EUGENE V DEBS

# THE INCARCERATED WORKER



A PROJECT OF THE INCARCERATED WORKERS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

# THE INCARCERATED WORKER

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The Incarcerated Worker is a publication of the Incarcerated Worker Organizing Committee of the Industrial Workers of the World

#### On the cover:

Women at Estrella Jail in Phoenix, Arizona line up before a day's work in a chain gang in 2012 (Front)

Eugene V Debs statement to the court upon his 1918 conviction for violating the Sedition Act (Rear),

#### Editorial Policy

The Incarcerated Worker features writings of prisoners, welcoming submissions particularly from a revolutionary labor perspective, all subject to editing for space and for content. Submissions should be sent to:

Kent Books to Prisoners  
CSI Box X  
KSU Student Cen.  
Kent, OH 44242

Collectively, we may not know exactly what we're looking for, but we'll know it when we see it. And we may not know what we're NOT looking for, but we'll definitely get plenty of it. We have to decide: Do we want to produce quality that will inspire and move people and contribute to a goal, or do we want to be a forum for terrible material no one else will print? I opt for the first. So, I suggest our editorial policy should be fluid and evolving and organic, case by case, issue to issue. In other words, no real policy at all. -Editor FW Sean Swain

However, this fluid is policy is subject to change at the democratic will of incarcerated workers like YOU! Fellow workers in Missouri prisons suggested a rotation of contributing authors. Authors shall be set in rotation each issue, so each gets a turn to share their voice. The more articles you send the more we can put in rotation. The articles should teach and motivate each other. The paper's goal is solidarity through communal knowledge; each one teach one! -Outside Editor, Mike L.

Other suggestions: There is no concrete limit on contribution sizes, but due to limited space the suggested sizes are around 5 pages maximum. Send your engrossed envelopes to us with requests for any additional literature, so we can save on postage. Kent Books to Prisoners is also open to any requests for reading material, not just IWW related stuff; so feel free to hit them up. Last, remember to share and spread things around so we can all grow!

Note: Although Kent Books to Prisoners is not an IWW organization, there are members in the collective; so it's an allied collective.



## IWOC STATEMENT OF PURPOSE JULY 31, 2014

1. TO FURTHER THE REVOLUTIONARY GOALS OF INCARCERATED PEOPLE AND THE IWW THROUGH MUTUAL ORGANIZING OF A WORLDWIDE UNION FOR EMANCIPATION FROM THE PRISON SYSTEM.

2. TO BUILD CLASS SOLIDARITY AMONGST MEMBERS OF THE WORKING CLASS BY CONNECTING THE STRUGGLE OF PEOPLE IN PRISON, JAILS, AND IMMIGRANT AND JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS TO WORKERS STRUGGLES LOCALLY AND WORLDWIDE.

3. TO STRATEGICALLY AND TACTICALLY SUPPORT PRISONERS LOCALLY AND WORLDWIDE, INCORPORATING AN ANALYSIS OF WHITE SUPREMACY, PATRIARCHY, PRISON CULTURE, AND CAPITALISM.

4. TO ACTIVELY STRUGGLE TO END THE CRIMINALIZATION, EXPLOITATION, AND ENSLAVEMENT OF WORKING CLASS PEOPLE, WHICH DISPROPORTIONATELY TARGETS PEOPLE OF COLOR, IMMIGRANTS, PEOPLE WITH LOW INCOME, LGBTQ PEOPLE, YOUNG PEOPLE, DISSIDENTS, AND THOSE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS.

5. TO AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF WORKING CLASS PEOPLE IN PRISON, ESPECIALLY THOSE ENGAGING IN COLLECTIVE ACTION OR WHO PUT THEIR OWN LIVES AT RISK TO IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS OF ALL.



Join the rank and file union that's organizing prisoners internationally!

Just send name, ID #, and address to:  
PO Box 414304  
Kansas City, Missouri  
64141-4304

Send your contributions of writings, art, and any other material for the building of this new project of prisoner self-determination to:

Kent Books to Prisoners  
Box X of CSI  
KSU Student Cen.  
Kent, OH 44242





confirmed that prisons don't function without inmate labor. And every day that the prison doesn't function the prison profit margin plummets.

Based upon these premises and understanding the motive behind Alabama's Prison Policies, Free Alabama Movement takes the position that - if we, collectively, engage in a proactive peaceful & nonviolent work stoppage, the financial burden will compel the Dept. of Corrections and the law makers of this state to be more receptive to our demands for fundamental Human Rights. This method also affords us the opportunity to show society that many of us are intelligent & rational men striving to resolve our issues with the most peaceful means possible; and to combat the misconception that we all are, irrational, violent predators lacking any morality and humanity.

All of Free Alabama Movement's action have been and will continue to be peaceful and nonviolent as we work to bring about a positive change within the Dept. of Corr. If they refuse to recognize the legitimacy of our Human and Civil Rights Struggle against the practices of the D.O.C. then it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to use their powers to stop Alabama's inhumane treatment and economical exploitations.

Maybe that's what it might take - as Alabama has a long history of having to be forced into glory, by the intervention of the Federal Government.

For those familiar with the Alabama history, let's not forget that it took the Federal intervention to abolish slavery, Federal Intervention to enforce reconstruction, Federal Intervention to outlaw convict leasing, Federal Intervention to enforce Civil Rights Laws in the 1960's and Federal Intervention in the 1970's when Alabama became the 1st prison system taken over by the Federal Courts due to inhumane treatment of it's prisoners.

40 YEARS LATER, the Alabama prison system is once again on the brink of a possible federal take over.

In the 1970's, the inmates resorted to VIOLENCE in order to push change.

TODAY, THE FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT VOWS AND IS COMMITTED TO EFFECTING CHANGE BY PEACEFUL & NONVIOLENT MEANS...



art credit: <http://rashidmod.com/>

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**PRISONERS** are on the front lines of wage slavery and forced slave labor

where refusal to work while in prison results in inhumane retaliation and participating in slave labor contributes to the mechanisms of exploitation. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) has consciously grasped the importance of organizing prisoners so that prisoners can directly challenge prison slavery, work conditions, and the system itself: break cycles of criminalization, exploitation, and the state sponsored divisions of our working class. At the same time, the prison environment and culture is a melting pot of capitalistic and exploitative tactics and all forms of oppression. These poisons must be challenged in prisons, institutions, and in all of us, through organized working class solidarity.

Members of the IWW have created the IWOC, the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee, which functions as a liaison for prisoners to organize each other, unionize, and build solid bridges between prisoners on the inside and fellow workers on the outside. Prison is a setup, a big business, there to make money off the People. Neither the setup, nor the slavery inside of prisons can be combated without the conscious participation of prisoners and the working class on the outside through mutual aid, solidarity, and the building of working relationships that transcend prison walls and the politics of mass incarceration. The IWOC has been actively reaching out to prisoners while at the same time prisoners have been reaching out to the IWW for representation and assistance in building a prisoners union. The IWOC has taken up the cause and is helping prisoners in every facility organize and build a union branch for themselves, which will together form a powerful IWW Industrial Union.

To achieve this cage slave/wage slave alliance the IWOC is accepting IWW membership applications from prisoners who agree with the IWW Constitution and believe that to truly change prison conditions prisoners must be organized and working towards such goals with the help and support of the working class on the outside. Prisoners will be full fledged members of the IWW with their own local prison branch to maintain and develop and will have the same rights and responsibilities of members on the outside. However, due the exploitative nature of the prison system, prisoners are granted free IWW membership, and will not be required to pay dues while in prison. Outside members of the IWOC will be in direct communication with prisoners and provide organizing training, support and guidance in union building, solidarity, and collaborative actions.

We have a world to win and nothing to lose but our chains. In every ghetto, barrio, trailer park, and prison cell, working class solidarity will prevail!

# CONTRIBUTORS

## Dennis Boatwright

**The Free Alabama Movement (FAM)** is a movement comprised of hundreds of prisoners in Alabama. The movement contacted the IWW in summer of 2014 to create a new alliance against prison slavery. In 2010 FAM organized a labor strike that made the private prison corporation, GEO corp. loose around \$880,000 in profit. Since then the movement has organized other additional projects such as a “re-entry preparedness bill”, and other non-violent direct actions against prisoner slavery. They are still organizing despite the heavy repression against them. **Kinetik Justice Amun** (g.n. Robert E. Council) is a member of FAM.

## Siddique-Abdulla Hasan (Carlos Sanders)

**Kevin "Rashid" Johnston** is a New Afrikan Communist revolutionary artist & writer. He founded one of the 1st New Black Panther Party Prison Chapters, and is now a fellow worker in the IWW! More of his art and writings can be found at rashidmod.com

**Bomani Shakur** (Keith LaMar) is one of the political prisoners of the Lucasville 5. Like the rest of his comrades who survived the Lucasville Uprising of '93 his if fighting against the unjust prosecution of his brothers and for the truth of the incidents of the uprising to be brought to light! He has also recently completed his 1st book, *Condemned*. If you're interested in a copy, you can contact the Kent Books to Prisoners address for a free one. Selected for your reading pleasure is one of Bomani's political essays about the prison system of America.

“My journey through this life has been and continues to be a mystery. I remain eager to understand it. As a human being, my fundamental goal is simply to be free to walk in the sunshine without man’s ugly bars of oppression hindering my movement. I’m talking about freedom in the purest sense: To love, to live, to laugh, to struggle, to cry and – even – to die a free man. To be free... These long years in solitary confinement have not turned me around. I’m still moving straight ahead. I still believe in the human experience and in the notion that love is the only freedom.” –Bomani Shakur, January 2014 (from [www.keithlamar.org](http://www.keithlamar.org))

**Sean Swain** is a hostage held by a lawless rogue-state calling itself “The State of Ohio.”\* He has been held without legal conviction or sentence since 1991 for the self-defense killing of a court official’s relative who broke into Sean’s home and threatened his life. In fall of 2012, prisoners calling themselves the Army of the 12 Monkeys (A12M) got rowdy at Mansfield Correctional, and the prison authorities assumed “that anarchist” Sean Swain must have been behind it and threw him in supermax isolation. Sean denies any involvement or affiliation with the A12M and is in the process of suing the ODRC (Ohio Department of Rehabilitations & Corrections) for targeting him based exclusively on his ideology and political speech. Sean is the only son of a retired auto worker and stay-home mom. He has renounced his high school diploma, his college degree, and his honorable discharge from the U.S. military. Before being taken hostage, Sean worked as a newspaper columnist and as a union organizer. Today, he continues to use these skills to organize prisoner-workers for the IWW.

\*The Treaty of Greenville in 1795 established most of Ohio as unceded “Indian Territory.” The so-called “State of Ohio” has no legal claim whatsoever to exercising authority over this territory. Source: ([seanswain.org](http://seanswain.org))

## OUR GOALS ARE DEFINED

- 1) OVERCROWDING MUST BE ADDRESSED; 8-10 THOUSAND PEOPLE RELEASED.
- 2.) TAXATION WITHOUT COMPENSATION (FREE LABOR) ABOLISHED.
- 3.) PAROLE BOARD OVERHAULED TO ESTABLISH PAROLE CRITERIOR.
- 4.) ABOLISH LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE, LIFE/BARRED FROM PAROLE & THE DEATH PENALTY.
- 5.) AMEND ARBITRARY & DISCRIMINATORY APPLIED LAWS, i.e. 13A-5-40 (16)(17)(18).

## WHY FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT?

In every stage of these inhumane conditions, we have petitioned the courts for redress, in the most humble method-filing lawsuit after lawsuit. Our repeated petitions have been answered with time-stalling rhetoric, as we continue to suffer from neglect while the D.O.C. daily reaps the financial benefits of our economical exploitations.

And as of June 2013, Alabama law makers established that prisoners could no longer file "class action" law suits against the D.O.C. in regards to inhumane living conditions. (SEE PRISON LITIGATION REFORM ACT)

History has taught us that convincing the court to issue new rules to improve day to day life in prison and changing exploitive policies requires, not only petitions, but also

the creation and maintenance of a legitimate prisoner's rights movement-both inside and outside the prison walls. Clearly stated, to make real sustaining fundamental change in the inhumane treatment and overcrowded prison conditions, we can't rely on law suits alone - they have to be connected to the larger struggle.

## FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT IS THE LARGER STRUGGLE - GET INFORMED !! WHY A WORK STOPPAGE?

It is our understanding based on various in depth studies that \*MASS INCARCERATION, UNCONSTITUTIONAL OVERCROWDED PRISONS AND THE INHUMANE TREATMENT ARE MORE ABOUT ECONOMICS THAN THE HUMANITY OF PEOPLE. The numbers support our contention that "MONEY" is the motive and most important factor in explaining the policies and conditions within the D.O.C. Therefore, an economical response is our most effective strategy.

## A PEACEFUL & NONVIOLENT ECONOMICAL RESPONSE...

Each institution is a "STATE FREE LABOR FORCE", which generates BILLIONS of dollars each year, in tax dollars, industry market, imposed fines & fees, co-payments, court costs and the millions saved by inmate "FREE LABOR."

We have researched and studied the lessons of previous prison movements throughout the country; and the evidence of the Jan. 1, 2014 - Jan. 21, 2014 work stoppage has

# A FLICKER TURNS INTO A FLAME: ALABAMA'S PRISONERS WANT CHANGE

KINETIK JUSTICE AMUN (G.N. ROBERT E. COUNCIL) ON BEHALF OF FAM

A report from F.A.M.'s Southern Region

Today in America, there's the resurgence of a People's Movement sweeping across the Nation -- As the flame of inhumane treatment and economical exploitation has billowed into a wildfire demanding change.

Reminiscent of the Civil Rights Movement of the 60's, from California to Ohio, Texas to Florida, there is a deafening call for an end to America's systemized targeting, mass incarcerating, warehousing, then economically exploiting those considered, "LOW CLASS," i.e., New African, Hispanic and poor whites. Suffering from gross incompetence, sub-par management of resources and the Nation's highest OVERCROWDING RATIO - 200% over it's designed capacity-that flame of change touched the Alabama Prison system.

On Jan. 1, 2014, FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT launched a cross-racial

collective action - a PEACEFUL & NON VIOLENT PROTEST for Human & Civil Rights, in the form of a work stoppage, which spread to St. Clair Corr. Fac. on Jan. 3, 2014 and Elmore Corr. Fac. on Jan. 5, 2014.

"THE FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT"

Free Alabama Movement is an "INSIDE-OUTSIDE" solidarity network, which has brought Alabama Prison Class and Human Rights Advocacy Groups together across Racial, Ideological and Geographic differences - thereby created a cross denominational solidarity, unlike anything ever seen in the Alabama Prison System.

Free Alabama Movement is a peaceful & nonviolent protest for the human and civil rights of over 27,000 incarcerated citizens and several more thousands of family & friends of those incarcerated citizens.

Our message is clear - we proclaim that Alabama's practice of:

WAREHOUSING INMATES IN OVERCROWDED DORMITORIES..

PROVIDING NO EDUCATIONAL OR REHABILITATION PROGRAMS..

PROHIBITING AN INMATE FROM BEING COMPENSATED FOR HIS LABOR, WHILE FORCING HIM TO PAY FINES AND FEES... IS INHUMAN & EXPLOITATIVE IN VIOLATION OF THE STANDARDS OF HUMAN DECENCY...

## THE IWW BY SEAN SWAIN

This originally aired on The Final Straw radio show.

X380847. That's my membership number in the Industrial Workers of the World. The I.W.W. has been around since 1905, making typical unions with the bosses and bureaucratic party, nervous, since the stated goals of the I.W.W. is the abolition of the wage system altogether rather than reformist efforts to "improve" the conditions of the owners and union bosses. Unlike every other union that sought to divide the workers into trades, the Wobblies, as the I.W.W. was called - had the ambitious program of unionizing all workers into one big union and thereby put the power into the hands of all workers collectively to shut down the industrial production system entirely.

Like the famed anacho- syndicalist unions of Spain, the F.A.I. & C.N.T, Wobblies promoted worker direct action. In the teens and 20's, Wobblies were targeted with charges of criminal syndicalism, sabotage and sedition.

Yeah. It was treason to demand a fair shake, to imagine power wrested from the hands of Crapitalists.

Still is, of course.

After FDR'S New Deal and the rise of the more reformist and industrial friendly

unions like the AFL-CIO, Teamsters, and United Workers , the threat and the influence of the I.W.W. faded. Between state repression and the major unions collaborating to squeeze out the Wobblies, the I.W.W. was largely neutralized during a time when anarchists were evolving new strategies and approaches that didn't necessarily involve the seemingly impossible task of organizing all the workers of the entire of the entire world into the same union. But the Wobblies did not go away. They didn't become extinct. They're still around and making a comeback, if you can call it that. Innovating to become relevant. The I.W.W. is actively soliciting prisoner membership, something no other union - apart from specifically prisoner unions- has attempted to do. You don't see, for instance, the U.A.W. or Teamsters organizing prisoners - even though even though you've got Honda wardens at Mansfield Correctional in Ohio as just one example. There's been a trend over the last 20 or 30 years for corporations to outsource production to prisoners who receive slave wages and lack the health and safety protections enforced in the so-called free world. That's one of the driving engines, by the way, of the prison boom and the incarceration boom: cheap labor.... leaving everyone else sleeping in their cars.

Prisons are now Third World colonies, fenced off and ready for exploitation. Why move a factory all the way to Mexico, or India when you can take advantage of slave labor in Alabama prisons?

Apart from simply keeping the repression machinery of the State operating- and thereby allowing the State to ratchet up the repression – the Green Scare, the crackdown on protesters as terrorists – prison labor is now an integrated component of the global economy. As an indication of just how essential prison slave labor has become, in an Each One Teach One interview with Anthony Rayson of the South Chicago Anarchist Black Cross Zine Distro, I mentioned that if Ohio prisoners simply laid on their bunks for 30 days, the states entire economy would collapse. It wouldn't simply disrupt the prison system, it would tank the states entire economy.....and it wouldn't recover for a decade.

In 2008 a year after I made that observation, the State attempted to get me transferred to supermax. So, if there was any doubt about my assessment of how critical prisoner slave labor is to Ohio's economy, the States reaction certainly confirmed I was right.

But prison authorities can't legally punish union membership. The U.S. Supreme Court in Jones vs North Carolina Prisoner Labor Union, Inc made a distinction between membership, which is protected, and union activity, like striking, which is not. And this is where the Wobblies can become very effective at consciousness-raising among prisoners, educating and radicalizing. Everyone can be a wobbly. And once all the prisoners are Wobblies and act collectively it's too late to put the proverbial poop back into the donkey. The State can shoot us to

death.....but it can't shoot us back to work. And they can't put all 3 million of us in superdupermax either.

You know where 3 million Wobblies sit? Wherever they want to sit. If you have a friend or loved one locked up or you just want more information, contact the I.W.W. at 773-857-1090. That's 773-857-1090. Or email them, ghq@iww.org. You can write the I.W.W. via snail mail at POB 180195 Chicago,IL 60618 Membership for prisoners is free.

Wherever there is exploitation let's grind it to a halt!

This is I.W.W. X 380847 at Ohio's supermax facility, if you're reading, you are the resistance.

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE: DENNIS S. BOATWRIGHT, JR.**

**BY IMAM SIDDIQUE ABDULLAH HASAN**

If many celebrate George Jackson as the Nat Turner of the U.S. prison system, then we must applaud Dennis Samuel Boatwright, Jr., as its Thomas Paine. Like Thomas Paine, the great American educator and pamphleteer, Dennis, through his provocative writings and well-disciplined conduct, inspires countless prisoners throughout the Unit to use their common sense when analyzing social, political, and economic phenomena. In fact, from reading his piercing perspectives,

prisons? If he makes it through orientation without being raped, he's lucky. It's a brutal world in here, and unless one is totally devoid of common sense, one very quickly learns that there is safety in numbers. In other words, the picture repeats and expands, and it's the ghetto streets all over again. But in here the police operate without restraint, and the old adage about "absolute power corrupting absolutely" is on full display. Not a day goes by without someone sprayed in the face with mace, shot with a pellet gun, or thrown down a flight of stairs.

A few weeks ago, while watching the news, I witnessed a group of college students in California being sprayed in the face with mace because they had the audacity to protect against the rising cost of college tuition, student-loan debt, and the uncertainty surrounding future employment. In New York City (and around the country), I witnessed members of Occupy Wall Street being forcibly evicted from their camps, some (as in Oakland California) being shot with pellet guns, thrown atop automobiles, and kicked and shoved about like cattle. Watching these things, it occurred to me that this is what Dostoyevsky must have meant when he said, "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons." Indeed, what many Americans witnessed and experienced for the first time is something that those of us in prison witness and experience on a daily basis.

So why are normal, everyday citizens being treated as criminals, and for what crimes are they being punished? From the perspective of those who own society, it's considered a lack of appreciation when slaves rise up to question their masters; and of course when people come together and begin to talk earnestly about the inequity of the system, they automatically represent a threat to the status quo and must go. Then we learn how thin the veneer of civilization really is, and how fragile our so-called freedoms are.

When eyes are burning with mace, when blood is dripping down the face, it all becomes frighteningly clear: Capitalism is a sham; and whether in or out (of prison), as long as we live under a system that views everything and everybody as a commodity, we're all doing time. And that, at the end of the day, is the real crime--not that some of us are locked up but none of us are free!



art credit: <http://rashidmod.com/>

while 30 million people languished below the poverty line--the United States produced 1,000 billionaires, and 227,000 millionaires with the combined worth of \$30 trillion, more than the GDP's of China, Brazil, Japan, Russia, and the EU put together. This is how the system of capitalism works: the rich get richer, and the poor get screwed--i.e., fucked in the anus sans grease!

In his book *Understanding Power*, Noam Chomsky talks about what he refers to as "superfluous population," which is a very intellectual way of calling people "trash." From the perspective of the rich, whose main objective is to accumulate wealth, human beings are useless when they no longer contribute to profit-making, so as a result, explains Noam Chomsky, they want to get rid of them--and the criminal justice system is one of the best ways of doing it.

So prisons--it must be understood--aren't about controlling crime and punishing those who commit it; they're about controlling the poor. Looked at correctly, it's not an exaggeration to say that what Hitler was exterminating the Jews. The only real difference is that those who are now being thrown away are considered "criminals" which, let's face it, makes it a whole easier to accept. But just Hitler created the justification for the mass extermination of the Jews, so, too, have those in power created the justification for the mass incarceration of the poor.

When Ronald Reagan declared the so-called War on Drugs in the 1980's, a finely honed strategy of imposing mandatory sentences for particular kinds of drugs (read: crack cocaine) was used to lock up those from predominantly Black and Hispanic communities. For instance, a young man in the ghetto gets caught with a kilo of cocaine or twenty thousand dollars in cash, and he is sent to prison for twenty years. In the meantime, nothing is said about the chemical corporations who make billions of dollars from sending the necessary chemicals to Latin America in order to manufacture the very drugs that are destroying inner-cities throughout the United States.

And what about the bankers who launder billions of dollars in drug money through American banks? According to the O.E.C.D. (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), it's estimated that a half trillion dollars in drug money gets laundered internationally each year--more than half of it (\$260 billion) through American banks. But are any of these people in prison? The answer is NO! And the reason why none of these people are in prison is because those in power determine what constitutes a crime and, more importantly, who gets categorized as criminals. A white man laundering billions of dollars in drug money is a businessman. A black man selling drugs in the ghetto is a criminal; and for his "crimes," he is sent to prison.

And what happens to that Black-poor White or Hispanic - man when he enters America's

prisons attest to their ability to better contextualize their own incarceration. His friend and confidant, 'Sin,' captures the feeling of many in the following attestation:

In the time that I have known Dennis, he has been a great inspiration in my life. Through his determination and mild manner in his own endeavor, [he] has renewed and strengthened my ambition towards my own personal goals as well as opened my eyes even further about views and opinions I have about social improvement in your black urban communities of Detroit. To speak of Dennis as a friend, anything said would be an understatement. What I can say, though, is that you don't find Black men of his calibre often. He is truly a rare individual that I'm grateful to have made his acquaintance.

To understand how Dennis evolved into the extraordinary thinker and educator to whom we are fondly and proudly introducing you, we must relate a series of life-altering experiences that combined to shape his relentless disposition and discerning worldview.

Dennis was born in Detroit on February 28, 1970, to a married couple, Dennis and Brenda Boatwright. At the tender age of four, two horrendous tragedies happened to Dennis, Jr. He was run over by a speeding Corvette while attempting to cross the street. He drifted in and out of consciousness for a few months before ultimately winning his life-threatening battle. Then, before he fully recovered from

that near-fatal accident, his father, Dennis, Sr., was gunned down on Halloween night.

While just a kindergartener, his teacher recognized in her precocious five year-old student an unusual ability to spell and comprehend difficult words such as "apopsiopsis." His second grade teacher, out of frustration in seeing that the adults in her student's life were not able to recognize his intellectual talents, pleaded in vain to his 27 year-old mother to allow her to adopt him. This hints at how he is able to write advanced papers without formal college education. Throughout her short life, Dennis' mother instructed him to be a critical thinker and not to accept information naively. Mrs. Boatwright passed away suddenly of a heart attack in 1986, right in front of Dennis while the two of th alone. Her instructions to him live on as is evident in his incisive and sometimes scathing comments on political affairs.

Dennis was sent to prison for the killing of a drug dealer, and he's been in prison for over 20 years. On the very first day of his incarceration he resolved to put his life on a positive course. At this early stage he became a bookish glutton-- that is, devouring all reading material within arms' length.

The first Persian Gulf War in 1991 introduced him to CNN news and to fascinating lands far away. While watching this military conflict unfold, he developed an insatiable desire to interpret international

relations. In 1993 two events thoroughly politicized his perspectives and accelerated this process: (1) the World Trade Center bombing, and (2) the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility prison uprising in Lucasville, Ohio. He wondered what drove foreign militants to attack symbols of America's financial power and what real reasons prompted Ohio prisoners to rise up.

This curiosity opened the door to a formal, independent study of political science and a profound respect for the writer hereof [Imam Siddique Abdullah Hasan], the accused mastermind of, and spokesperson for, the bloody SOCF uprising. As his inquisitiveness became more aggressive, so did his quest for books that offered specific answers. He soon began to lay down run-of-the-mill self-help books, which exclusively faulted readers' personal failings, for transformative books such as *Wretched of the Earth* and *Blood in My Eye*. These types of books clearly outline oppression and predatorial tendencies inherent when a large power-imbalance exists among disassociate groups and among nation-states. Concurrently, he casually mailed out his political thoughts to editors. To his surprise, various newspapers and magazines began to regularly publish his work. Thereupon, he decided to consciously contribute to the political discourse in society. Two years later, he earnestly published a newsletter entitled, *Mujahideenullah* (Freedom Fighters of Allah), but this monthly publication was eventually banned in all Michigan prisons. Why? It was classified as a threat to the order and

security of the prison system.

About this time, the bond he and I developed hardened. Now, over a decade later, our warm brotherly love and mutual respect have revealed one of life's rarest finds: true friendship.

Today, Dennis is the founding director of the Center for Pan-African Studies and the editor in chief of *The BottomLine*, a weekly e-newspaper currently in development. His intellectual interests encompass international relations, political economy, military science, and revolutionary theory. He is still an avid reader and now has command of the following languages: Swahili, Arabic, and Spanish. He jogs and exercises daily and is described as a hardcore, upper-echelon, physical fitness specialist, and has eager ambitions to run in the New York and Boston marathons upon release. In addition, he is a huge animal lover. Had world affairs been less chaotic, he would rather be pursuing veterinary or zoological activities. In his spare time, which is very infrequent, he enjoys playing chess and watching sports.



art credit: <http://rashidmod.com/>

economic and political institutions of society, claim that they are the sole cause of their predicament.

Despite what those in power would have us believe, no one starts out with the goal of becoming a criminal and spending the bulk of their lives behind bars, in and out of prison. As individuals, we make choices based on what we perceive our options to be; and those options, be they good or bad, are a product of the society we live in.

"When a society is industrialized," explains C. Wright Mills, "a peasant becomes a worker; a feudal lord is liquidated or becomes a businessman. When classes rise and fall, a man is employed or unemployed; when the rate of investment goes up or down, a man takes new heart or goes broke. When wars happen, an insurance salesman becomes a rocket launcher; a store clerk, a radar man; a wife lives alone; a child grows up without a father."

Similarly, when a society is deindustrialized, a steel worker becomes a corrections officer; a would-be college student, a drug dealer. When communities are decimated and hemmed in by poverty, families take new heart or fall apart. When a fictitious "War on Drugs" is declared on the innercity, penitentiaries are built in rural areas and filled with criminals; a wife lives alone; a child grows up without a father.

Contrary to what we have been told, this is how life (under the system of capitalism)

unfolds--not in a picnic basket of unlimited opportunity, but in a crucible of socioeconomic forces that force us to assume positions of survival. Thus, a steel worker becomes a correctional officer, not in pursuit of a lifelong dream but in order to feed his family. A boy growing up in the ghetto becomes a criminal/gang banger, not to glorify crime but in order to survive. And what C. Wright Mills would have us understand is that the various permutations that we as individuals undergo are directly connected to the economic and political permutations of the system.

When corporations, through Congress, lobby for the enactment of NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), removing obstacles for corporate capital and goods to move back and forth between Mexico and the United States, they do so with full knowledge and understanding of the economic consequences. Cheaper labor means greater profits; but it also means the closing of factories, a lower standard of living, a subpar educational system, and an increase in crime, as normal, everyday citizens scramble to survive- And what do those in power do in order to address the ramifications of their decisions? They build more prisons

With the advent of deindustrialization in the 1980's, the prison population in the United States more than quadrupled, peaking at 2.5 million and surpassing both South Africa and Russia in per capita prison populations. During the same period (1980-2007) —



human potential, one's very existence becomes a crime; and whether this takes on the form of selling drugs, stealing food, or joining a gang to fight over turf and limited resources, the goal is to stay alive.

I grew up in poverty, born to a marginally educated black woman who, because of a lack of opportunity, sought to raise me and my three siblings on welfare in the whole 42 years I've been alive. I've only seen my father one time. By age of ten, I was stealing food from the neighborhood grocery store in order to survive. I was thirteen when I took my first joyless joyride in a stolen vehicle, which ultimately led to my being sent away for the first time. By the time I turned seventeen, I had been living on my own for several years and selling drugs in one of the most impoverished, drug infested neighborhoods in Cleveland Ohio. A few months after my nineteenth birthday, in 1988, the year crack cocaine became an epidemic, I was involved in a shoot-out over money and killed a rival drug dealer. For this, I was sent to prison to serve a life sentence for murder.

In a nutshell, this is the story of my life, and if any of it was unique, the telling of it would be inconsequential, and unnecessary recounting of my own personal troubles. However, what makes my story significant is that it's the exact same tale told by millions of poor people who grow up in the slums of America, which points to the possibility of there being something larger than one's

personal troubles at work in the process to determine where one ends up in this society.

In his groundbreaking work on *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills, using the example of unemployment, explains the difference between personal troubles and societal issues:

“When, in a society of 100,000, only one man is unemployed, that is his personal trouble, and for its relief we properly look to the character of the man, his skills, and his immediate opportunities. But when in a nation of 50 million employees, 15 million men are unemployed, that is an issue, and we may not hope to find its solution within the range of opportunities open to any one individual. The very same structure of opportunities has collapsed. Both the correct statement of the problem and the range of possible solutions require us to consider the economic and political institutions of society, and not merely the personal situation of a scatter of individuals.”

Applying the same logic, it should be considered an issue that black people--in a country wherein they only represent thirteen percent of the population--make up 50 percent of those who are sent to prison. It is likewise an issue that virtually 100 percent of those behind bars are poor and come from economically deprived sections of society.

In addressing this issue, it's not enough to point the finger at a bunch of so-called criminals and, without first looking at the

## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF PRISONER INTELLECTUALS

BY DENNIS S. BOATWRIGHT

Lingering inside a mismanaged, overcrowded prison system--and quietly floating atop a raging sea of unharnessed violence and wholesale despair--lives a shining group of prisoners who manage to keep the fire of their sanity, dignity and intellectual dexterity glowing despite living in corrupt institutions that nourish, glamorize and facilitate dark tendencies.

The existence of these unique individuals is largely unknown by society. Their voices are muted and maliciously misrepresented by lawmakers and status quo media outlets, whose political survival and television ratings significantly depend upon making dreadful perceptions of prisoners seem like reality. Tough-on-crime rhetoric is amplified to rescue endangered re-election bids. The resulting pattern reveals itself as an endless passing of redundant crime bills and a surge in television crime shows, such as *Prison Break* and *Juvis*. U.S. politicians portray sympathy. This is a winning strategy: As long as the crime rate is above zero, theoretically, tougher legislation is warranted.

Forgotten in this hype are scores of reformed and self-taught prisoners. These brilliant prisoners possess extraordinary intellectual capabilities that are beneficial to society. Many demonstrate that they are willing and

capable of participating in scholarly discourses. The fact that they exist should not surprise those familiar with the history of resistance.

The social environment of prisons produces one of the world's most perplexing paradoxes: They house dangerous and chronic lawbreakers, yet they also produce great thinkers who are models of strength and integrity. Throughout history prisoners have played an important role in advancing the parameters in the social sciences. Important papers and political treatises were written by authors held in dungeons or solitary confinement. Some of their work continues to inspire millions and influence the direction of academic discussion today. One of these convicts is Antonio Gramsci.

Antonio Gramsci is regarded by many as the most influential Marxist thinker of the twentieth century. He was jailed in 1926 for his political activities in Italy, during the authoritarian rule of Mussolini, the Fascist premier of Italy (1922-43). While in prison, Gramsci wrote "Prison Notebooks," a collection of international political economy, and he is credited with originating the concept of the "organic intellectual."

According to Gramsci, only by achieving cultural hegemony could progressives move into the stage of socioeconomic revolution. Gramsci believed that dominant ideologies become embedded in society, to the extent that they begin to be considered unquestioned common sense. . What's more remarkable about Gramsci is that he wrote

without access to books, and also in code, in order to circumvent the prison censor. Gramsci remained in prison for 11 years, until his untimely death.

Great thinkers and leaders often tower higher in death than in life. Sayyid Qutb may be counted among them. Sayyed Qutb is considered the ideological grandfather of modern Islamic militancy. Throughout his life he delivered fiery speeches and wrote scathing articles and essays condemning the oppression of Muslims in general, and the atrocities and human rights abuses perpetuated by the Egyptian President Gemal Abdel Wasser, in October 1954, Qutb was thrown into prison and tortured. While in prison, he continued his political activities, effectively converting Egyptian jails into universities of radical Islamic thought. Before his execution in 1966, Qutb managed to smuggle out the manuscript of his monumental book. *Milestones*, chapter by chapter. Senior intelligence officials begrudgingly confide that Qutb's life and works continue to rally today's resistance activities in Iraq and in the broader Middle East.

Most educated African-American prisoners boast that George Jackson had a profound impact on their decision to take corrective steps toward rehabilitation. Jackson was sent to prison for a petty robbery that netted less than \$100.00. During his incarceration he spent most of his time reading and "chopping it up" (raising the sociopolitical awareness) with his fellow convicts, which

earned him the ire of prison authorities. In his own words:

"For the first four years I studied nothing but economics and military ideas. I met Black guerrillas, George 'Big Jake' Lewis and James Carr, W.L. Nolen, Bill Christmas, Terry Gibson and many, many others. We attempted to transform the Black criminal mentality into a Black revolutionary mentality. As a result, each of us has been subjected to years of the most vicious violence by the state."

Jackson and two other prisoners--John Clutchette and Fleets Crumgo--were charged with the murder of a white prison guard, John Mills, that happened just moments after another white prison guard, D.G. Miller, was exonerated on January 13, 1970, for the racist shooting death of three Black prisoners--Cleveland Edwards, Alvin Miller and W. L. Nolen--at Soledad State Prison. While in solitary confinement, Jackson authored *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson* and *Blood in My Eye*. Jackson's plight attracted international attention and his writings exposed the cruel anatomy of the Prison Industrial Complex. *Blood in My Eye* is regarded as the convict's version of Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*. Both books have been canonized and admitted into the pantheon of revolutionary literature. Jackson is still esteemed as the premier penitentiary revolutionary. He was assassinated by gun tower guards on August 21, 1971. Space constraints prevent enumeration of the scores of other prisoners

## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

BY BOMANI SHAKUR

"The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons."

--Dostoyevsky

If what Dostoyevsky says is true (and I believe it is), then America, which boast the largest prison population in the world, is perhaps the most uncivilized country there is. A bold statement, I know, especially coming from someone who has spent the past twenty-three years behind bars. But if what Dostoyevsky says is true then what happens inside these places is crucial to understanding what kind of society we live in, and who better to speak to the reality of prison life than someone who is living the experience?

But no one wants to learn about the madness that predominates inside these places. People--average, law-abiding citizens--are losing their homes, jobs, and struggling to survive, and the last thing anyone wants to hear is how hard prison is for a bunch of criminals. "If you can't do the time, don't do the crime" is the prevailing sentiment and attitude. It never occurs that the rising incarceration rate is connected to the same economic and political policies that resulted in the home-foreclosure crisis and the rise in unemployment.

When people think of crime, what usually comes to mind is a poor person inflicting

pain upon another poor person. Very seldom, if ever, do we stop and allow ourselves to consider the forces that create crime; trapped by the pull of our own necessities and fears, we live reactively, focusing on the effects instead of the causes of what we see and believe--and so we remain divided. And it's precisely because of this division that we are our own worst enemies--divided, they rule us!

But who are "they," and what do they have to do with the way in which we see and treat each other?

Howard Zinn, in his book *A People's History of the United States*, tells us who they are and how they use us against one another:

"[T]he wealthiest one percent of the nation owns a third of the wealth. The rest of the wealth is distributed in such a way as to turn those in the 99 percent against one another: small property owners against the propertyless, black against white, native-born against foreign-born, intellectuals and professionals against the uneducated and unskilled..."

Hence, in the context of a capitalistic society, crime is the result of an unequal distribution of wealth, a distinction between guilt and responsibility must be made. For instance, a person can be guilty of selling drugs but not at all responsible for creating the conditions wherein selling drugs is the only visible option of survival. Indeed, when one lives in a society where profit take precedence over

benefit financially from the prison boom from the prison boom which currently incarcerates 2.3 million people in our nation's prisons. This new trend of merely warehousing and punishing prisoners is not conducive to the security and stability of this nation. All it does is mentally crush prisoners' wills and doom them to inevitable failure. As a result of this new trend, prisoners are being released with no skills, no education, no support system, no jobs, and only a few dollars in their possession to try to make it in this dog-eat-dog world. Indeed, a recipe for disaster. It's implausible for ex-prisoners to survive under these bleak conditions. Let us not forget that unemployment, poverty, exclusion, and a lack of education and guidance are the ingredients which led to their imprisonment. So how can the system, or any rational human being, expect ex-prisoners to succeed when they're caught in a cyclic Catch-22.

Although a job is an essential means of support that helps people acquire the things they need, trying to secure a job is an ex-prisoner's greatest obstacle. Except when family or friends have been able to secure them employment, ex-prisoners are refused work due to their criminal history, something they can't change. With this revolving door being slammed in their faces, how do we expect them to react when they're stuck between a rock and a hard place? They then end up adopting the only culture they know: survival of the fittest. In plain old English, they resort to exploiting

their old ways of living- victimizing others to survive. Because of this induced failure, I share the below sentiments of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, a.k.a., Malcolm X: "I have no mercy or compassion in me for a society that crush[es] people and penalize[s] them for not being able to stand up under the weight."

Yes, it is my yearning hope that society will come to realize that in spite of their crimes, prisoners have the same tools, the same potentials, the same basic human desires, and the same capacity for change and positive development which all other citizens possess. They just need assistance in effectively developing their latent potentials. People change; even I have changed. In fact, life itself is a process of transformation.

With that said, it is my prayer that people will call on their elected officials to push for rehabilitative programs in prisons, as well as re-entry programs in society, that will help prisoners reintegrate in their communities and become law-abiding citizens.

From death row, this is Siddique Abdullah Hasan.

Siddique Abdullah Hasan, R130-559  
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who are worthy of mention, such as Rosa Luxemburg (*The Mass Strike: The Political Party and the Trade Union*), Eldridge Clever (*Soul on Ice*), Leon Trotsky, and numerous others.

Prisons are insulated from society's distractions, which enables time for introspection and contemplation. This is one explanation as to why prisons have a transformative power for certain prisoners. During isolation some prisoners discover unusual abilities and untapped potentials which lay dormant inside of them. Oppressive prison conditions account for the signature militant disposition of some learned prisoners. In prison, some prisoners also sharpen their skills of observing variations of human behavior, including that of prison guards. They see the best of human behavior as well as the worst expressions of racism being exhibited by the prison staff. The torture and sadistic photos documented at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison is not uncommon in U.S. prisons.

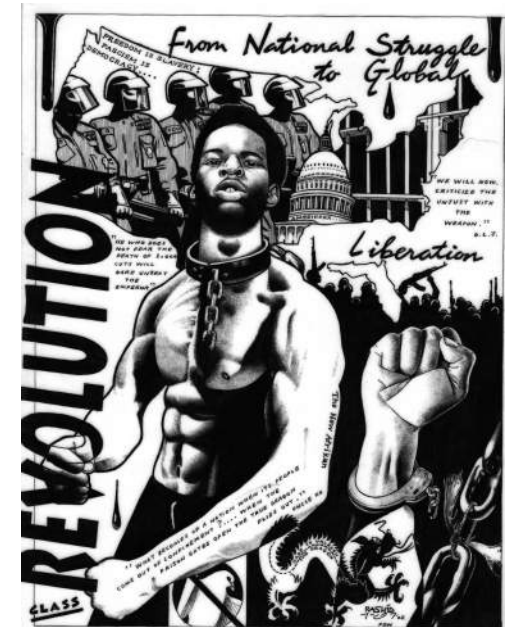
Future leaders and thinkers are projected to emerge from prisons. Consequently, counterintelligence measures are used to forestall this possibility. In 1994 college grants were taken away from all U.S. prisons.

This measure was intended to stunt the academic growth of prisoners and inhibit the development of critical thinking. Acquiring knowledge is an expensive endeavor. Intellectually inclined prisoners need the support of society. They need funds to procure educational material such as news

magazines, scholarly journals and college textbooks. Prisoners do not have access to the Internet. This restriction severely hampers their ability to do research and stay abreast of new findings and developments.

In this tumultuous post-9/11 world--a world with a shortage of capacity-backed solutions to our problems--we need input from every segment of society, including prisoners. If we overlook the insights of knowledgeable prisoners, we may in fact be ignoring the next Malcolm X.

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# FORGOTTEN WARRIOR WAITS ON DEATH ROW

BY ISA ABDUR-RASHEED

While the floodlight of public support illuminates the plight of Mumia Abu-Jamal, resulting in the indefinite delay of his slated execution,\* brother Siddique Abdullah Hasan lingers in a gloomy dark cell on death row without a flicker of support.

Brother Siddique has been abiding on death row for several years in the Ohio State Penitentiary after being wrongly convicted of crimes including being the mastermind behind the violent prison riot at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in 1993. That riot was ignited by inhumane prison conditions and the provocative acts of Warden Arthur Tate, Jr., who had resolved to make a name for himself. In order to expedite his thirst for fame as a get-tough kind of administrator, Tate adopted a mode similar to that of former Alabama governor, George Wallace that he knew would most likely elicit an angry reaction from prisoners, a reaction that would in turn give him justification to lay down an iron fist.

Shortly after being hired as the new warden, Tate immediately began to actualize his dreams. First, he began by scrapping all of the positive programs that had been in place for years and replacing them with harsh rules and regulations that even confounded many of the toughest guards. For instance,

just as Alabama Governor George Wallace personally stood in the entrance of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa in 1963, to prevent two Black students from receiving an education, Tate began his tenure of terror by disposing of college programs available for prisoners. Next, he abolished the music and literary programs and scores of other self-improvement programs that were designed to help rehabilitate inmates. By now, he was halfway to his goal.

In an attempt to rub salt in the wounded psyches of the distressed prisoners, he forced them to march military style to the chow hall, religious services, school, and recreational activities, while piercing shouts of overzealous prison guards echoed through the hallways.

As if that wasn't enough, codes of conduct were routinely formulated unilaterally and on an arbitrary basis. Quite often, prisoners were not aware of a rule until after being accused of violating it. To further complicate matters, poorly trained, pathologically-abusive, ego-tripping prison guards were given wide latitude and an unprecedented amount of power to enforce these draconian rules. White supremacists and Black nationalists were strategically assigned the same cell; sort of like forcing Newt Gingrich\*\* and Malcolm X to share the same cell-- a recipe for confrontation. By now, the prison atmosphere was like a pressure-cooker ready to explode.

The backdrop to all of this, prisoners were

a street until he was decapitated. Likewise, to accept their narrow definition is to deny that Amadou Diallo, Sean Bell, Tamika Wilson, Oscar Grant III, and too many others to name, were summarily executed. No, no, no! We cannot passively accept their narrow definition when we know it does a disservice to humanity, and especially to the family members of those whom were lynched.

## INDUCED FAILURE

BY IMAM SIDDIQUE ABDULLAH HASAN

The current penal system in America is not working. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to come to the conclusion that it predisposes prisoners to recidivism (a relapse into a life of crime). Since human beings are ultimately products of their environment, the current system's products speak for themselves: failure. The system's practices set its occupants up for exclusion from the mainstream success stories of society.

Except for families, friends, and loved-ones of prisoners and ex-prisoners, most Americans have not really considered their plight and daily struggles. Though various studies show that from one-half to two-thirds of parolees return to prison for violating the conditions of their release, or for re-offending, few-- taxpayers, prosecutors, politicians, or CEOs of corporations --seem to have really pondered the critical question: Why is this colossal recidivism taking place on our soil?

Have the citizens of this great, industrious

nation become so detached and desensitized that they could care less about prisoners' lives? I hope not, because prisoners desperately need your assistance in reintegrating back into society and fulfilling the expectation that they will become assets to their respective communities. According to Richard Gustafson, a columnist and retired teacher who taught 30 years at Miami Valley Career Technical Center, "National statistics indicate that recidivism is cut in half with support from the community."

It is my unyielding belief that recidivism is also tremendously reduced when the system pursues its once-desired effect: rehabilitation. However, rehabilitation is a thing of the past. It was in 1790 that the first penitentiary in this country opened its doors to house criminals. The purpose of this new creation was to place criminals in a confined area, where they might ponder over their crimes, repent, and reform themselves. Hence, the term "penitentiary." Much has changed in the last three decades due to the influences of tough-talking, opportunistic politicians who have reduced funding for rehabilitative programs to almost nil. So much so that rehabilitation, or producing a repentant person, is no longer the desired objective.

The current objective is to warehouse prisoners and deliberately create the circumstances for their failure. This crude objective is being perpetrated to maintain "job security" for parole officials, individuals in corporate America, and the like, who



out looking for a target to lynch or "harass." Notice I included the word "harass," because some people were of the opinion that the perpetrators only wanted to frighten someone. Anyway, they took Mr. Donald to the middle of a pine forest. The branches on the pine trees were at least 20 feet above the ground so they realized there was no way they could throw the rope over the branch and hang their intended victim. Nonetheless, as they pointed the gun at Mr. Donald, he courageously fought back and ultimately managed to seize the pistol. At that point the two tackled him, knocked him unconscious, went to the trunk of the car and got the rope, placed it around his neck and choked him to death. Afterward, they put his limp body in the trunk and then drove around Mobile trying to figure out what to do with the body. They finally decided to hang it from a tree across the street from where Hays lived.

In spite of it being hung just across the street from where a known racist and member of the KKK lived, amazingly, it was two years before the FBI was able to develop evidence which led them to Knowles, who ultimately cooperated in the prosecution of his co-defendant, Henry Hays.

Hays was convicted of capital murder and was eventually executed for his part in this senseless crime. In fact, to the best of my knowledge and belief, his execution was the first time a white person was ever executed in the United States for killing a Black person, notwithstanding there is

documented evidence that thousands upon thousands of Blacks have either been lynched or unjustifiably murdered between the end of Reconstruction [mid-1870s] and World War II. This within itself should tell us volumes about our so-called criminal justice system and how it regards the lives of Blacks to be insignificant in comparison to others. Another reminder that our criminal justice system is broken can be seen in the fact that Blacks and whites are murdered at relatively the same rate-- about 47% Blacks and 51% whites --yet 80% of those whom have been executed in the United States since its resumption on January 17, 1977, have been executed for murdering whites, while only 13% have been executed for murdering Blacks. These statistics alone send a clear and alarming message to any would-be murderer: Blacks are fair game. So the question becomes: What is lynching, and does it still exist today? According to the Establishment and their sympathizers, lynching is the process of putting someone to death by hanging-- be it from a tree, bridge, tower, flagpole, or atop of a bonfire -- and is executed by mob action and without legal authority. Since Ted Koppel belongs to the media Establishment, it should come as no surprise why he and his colleagues possess a narrow view as to what constitutes lynching.

To accept their narrow definition is to deny that James Byrd was lynched in 1988 in Jasper, Texas, where three white men put a chain around his neck, tied it to the back of a pick-up truck and then drove his body down

crammed like sardines in filthy overcrowded housing units, wherein signs that read "Out of Service" were regularly displayed on clogged sinks and overflowing toilets. Hot water was never hot. And on a mere whim, corrections officers routinely forced inmates to strip completely naked in order to submit to a dehumanizing full-body cavity search. Furthermore, sleeping prisoners were abruptly awakened in the middle of the night to allow prison guards to "shake down" their tiny cells. When the "shake down" was complete, overturned mattresses, clothing and contents of garbage cans dumped on the floor made it appear as though Hurricane Andrew had just struck. Also, the food usually fell well below government standards (undercooked meat, spoiled cartons of milk, watery oatmeal); yet, prisoners had no choice but to eat what was given to them.

Moreover, in an effort to increase the tension and ensure a violent response from, Tate decided to play doctor. He announced ad-lib that he would compel inmates to submit to a nonessential tuberculosis skin test. In his arrogance, he did not heed the advice of Muslims who were adamantly opposed to such a procedure that contained phenol, an alcoholic substance (in 5:90 of the Holy Qur'an, Muslims are prohibited from ingesting any form of alcoholic substance). From the beginning, the Muslims made it clear that they would be willing to submit to any of the other medically-accepted alternatives, i.e., chest x-rays, urinalysis, sputum specimens, and other procedures that were not in violation of their religious

beliefs. Instead, Tate opted to force the skin test anyway, thinking that if he yielded to the wishes of inmates, it would dilute the machismo image he endeavored so hard to portray. Little did he know, this was the straw that broke the camel's back. Finally, Tate would get much more than what he bargained for.

On Easter Sunday, 1993, a riot erupted at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility at Lucasville, sparking national attention. Fed up, infuriated prisoners revolted as a unified body, setting years of superficial animosities aside. The Aryan Brotherhood, Sunni Muslims, Muslim Brotherhood, Gangster Disciples-- groups that no one could ever imagine cooperating with one another -- bonded together as one. Issues of white or Black were completely ignored. Prisoners vented their anger by seizing control of the facility and ransacking the housing units. Broken tables, twisted chairs and soiled linen were strewn throughout the abandoned hallways. Terrified guards ran helter-skelter toward cramped exits, stumbling over one another in an attempt to escape the upheaval. Some were not so lucky. Several guards who were deserted by their once-loyal coworkers were bound and taken hostage. Snitches fled to their cells. Some hid beneath their beds; others tried unsuccessfully to barricade themselves behind cell doors, using chairs, tables and lockers as reinforcements.

Many were stabbed or beaten to death with makeshift knives (shanks) and other

dangerous objects too odd to describe. Mangled bodies of the slain victims lie in pools of blood, while the suffocating stench of decomposing corpses formed a thick haze throughout the compound. Ironically, while all this was taking place, Tate, who was responsible for laying the groundwork for this insurrection, had just settled down miles away in the comforts of his home to enjoy a delicious holiday meal.

As the days went by, desperate inmates repeatedly stated that they would gladly end the riot if some of their modest demands were met. However, stubborn prison officials would not budge.

To show that inmates were serious about their demands, officer Robert Vallandingham was killed and his limp body was dumped on the concrete on the prison yard, astonishing onlookers. At that moment, prison authorities realized that the prisoners meant business and that Tate's uncompromising posture was detrimental to the lives of the remaining hostages. Finally, authorities agreed to negotiate, and on the eighth day attorney Niki Z. Schwartz was asked to come in to represent the inmates. In the remaining days, prison authorities and inmates exchanged requests, signalling an end to the uprising. Three days later, the riot was over. In the aftermath, nine inmates and one guard were killed.

Brother Hasan played a key role in saving dozens of lives and negotiating a peaceful resolution to a bloody riot. He is accredited

with sheltering inmates who were the target of other inmates seeking retribution for previous squabbles. Many inmates acknowledge that if it wasn't for brother Hasan's heroic actions, they would not be alive today. At times when the uprising degenerated to barbarism, with many prisoners attacking each other-- losing sight of their original purpose for rioting --brother Hasan stepped to the forefront and urged calm.

His stellar reputation and exceptional leadership qualities transformed a scene of pandemonium to a well-organized protest. The manner in which he conducted himself coupled with his devotion to the Qur'an and Sunnah impressed even one of the captors who embraced Islam during the uprising. As officer Tony Demons was freed during a live CNN television broadcast, he calmly emerged from the building and walked onto the yard donning Islamic garb, stunning everyone. Later he told reporters how frightening the ordeal was for him, and then he went on to describe how during the incident he balled up in the corner and "cried like a baby." However, at the moment he embraced Islam, he stated that his fear of men was replaced with the fear of Allah Ta'ala.

"Now, I have nothing to fear but Allah," he proudly told reporters in an interview a day later. (This phenomenon is not rare in Islam; during the time of Prophet Muhammad [s.a.w.s.] there are documented instances of captured enemies opting to remain on the

Muslims' side instead of returning to their original side. In modern times, the same occurred in Afghanistan and in Bosnia, wherein captured Russian soldiers chose to remain and fight on the Muslims' side.)

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## **LYNCHING: THEN AND NOW**

**BY IMAM SIDDIQUE ABDULLAH HASAN**

In the revolutionary spirit of past, present, and future revolutionaries, I greet each and every one of you in attendance with the revolutionary salute: SHIELDS UP!

First and foremost, I want to thank Brotha Patrick Dyer, a good friend and comrade of mine, for inviting me to speak at this year's Campaign to End the Death Penalty national speaking tour stop in North Georgia. Being born and raised in the projects and war zones in Savannah, I know all too well about lynching and the lynch-mob mentality that exist in Georgia and the surrounding states. So I have to admit, I am profoundly moved by the honor bestowed upon me to speak with you about this year's theme: Lynching Then, Lynching Now.

During the fall of 2008 [October 13, 2008], Ted Koppel, an award-winning journalist and former anchorman for *Nightline*, hosted a television program called "The Last Lynching." I'm not sure if any of you have seen this program or not, but this one-hour special aired on the Discovery Channel, where Mr. Koppel was the managing editor.

While the backdrop of the program offered a look at "how far this country has come on the racial front," and "how acts of hatred and racism have affected the lives of three Americans," the focus was about the 1981 lynching of Michael Donald, a 19 year-old Black man who was murdered and then his limp body was hung from a tree across the street from one of the perpetrators' apartment. The fact that most of you probably never even heard of Mr. Donald's story and the fact that the program was incorrectly called "The Last Lynching", I can think of no better way to begin my presentation than to begin it by narrating the story of this innocent, courageous young man.

Mr. Donald was murdered in Mobile, Alabama, by Henry Francis Hays and James "Tiger" Knowles, two members of the Ku Klux Klan.

The Ku Klux Klan in Southern Alabama had met that week and discussed the fact that a Black man was on trial in Mobile, accused of shooting a white police officer. The members of the Klan, including Hays and Knowles, felt there was a risk that the killer would be acquitted and they were very concerned that a Black man would be able to get away with killing a white police officer.

Ultimately on Friday evening, the jury reported it was unable to reach a verdict since it was "hung." Infuriated and fueled by that, Hays and Knowles borrowed 15 feet of rope from Hays' brother-in-law and went